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have no clear history of this kind of situation, but it seems possible that when there was no heir who could clearly claim ascendancy over the whole of a primal segment, the segment then split into two. Thus in our example, if there were sons in bevies 2 and 3 but not in bevy 1, the primal segment formed for the great wife in bevy 1 would in the next generation have split into two segments, one led by the heir in bevy 2 and the other by the heir in bevy 3. This hypothesis would be in accord with some of the disputes which I recorded between eldest sons by different mothers, each claiming to be the principal heir of their father.

Information drawn from village histories shows that there were sometimes similar disputes about which son of the great wife should be heir. The eldest son could be passed over if he were an obvious fool, and there was, therefore, the possibility of conflict between those who thought him a fool and those who did not. When the first wife married did not become the great wife, her eldest son was sometimes older than the great wife's son, and was sometimes his rival as heir. The contradiction between superordination by age and by status of mother among half-brothers brought up in the same vicinity led to conflict. A fourth mode of conflict was between a man's son and his lieutenant. Where the son was unsuccessful in commanding the loyalty of his father's dependants, effective leadership in his father's segment sometimes passed to the lieutenant.

We should, I think, be mistaken if we regarded these modes of dispute as causes. They were rather the idioms in which, in this particular system, rivalry was expressed between contiguous segments. Many dependants brought power and prestige for their lord, and the struggle for dependants went on within this remarkably flexible and yet orderly system. A man attracted dependants by remaining loyal to his lord; yet the more dependants he gained the more he differentiated himself from his lord. If a man was not the rightful heir in one segment, then he could try to gain the support of the lord of a higher segment and hope thereby to alter the distribution of power in the lower one. This consideration became particularly important after the arrival of Europeans, who exercised control over the whole State and at the same time were ignorant of and not bound by the values which maintained the old system.

We have mentioned the possibility of conflict between heirs arising from the method of ranking bevies. The same principle of ranking applied to segments and headquarters as well as to bevies of wives, and there were similar possibilities of conflict. In certain situations it appears as if that which was founded first was dominant,

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554 and in other situations that which was founded last. The head-
579 quarters of the highest segment was in some sense capital of the
611 nation, yet chieftainship had already passed from it and it was less
621 important in other ways than the headquarters founded by the
[643] reigning chief. This apparent contradiction applied within every large segment. We have endeavoured to isolate these different contexts by our distinction between primal and residual segments, but as soon as we attempt to arrange villages or bevies of wives in a linear order without reference to the relationship of their associated segments to one another, the contradiction reappears.

A clear and accepted sequence of heirs would have been
621 appropriate to a segmentary system in which segments continued to
611 hold together in all circumstances. Ngoni segments did not do this, and the simple linear sequence of heirs was lacking. The successive formation of inferior segments implied increased structural separation between the first inferior segment to be formed and the headquarters, and hence less likelihood that the former would provide the main heir. As in lineage systems, the farther back the point of departure from the main line the greater the structural separation from it. But whereas in lineage systems it is the junior lines which are continually diverging from the main stem, in the Ngoni system the main heir was the first to break away from his father, who remained longer in close contact with his junior sons. Seniority within the newly formed undivided segment implied early differentiation within it, and hence early separation from its headquarters. Thus, the general principle of increasing separation with the passage of time, together with the particular principle of segment formation in order of seniority, combined to make a system of great flexibility despite essential regularity and uniformity. On the death of each segment head there was a shift of power within his segment and to some extent a formal recognition of the structural separation which had proceeded gradually during his lifetime. The headquarters founded by successive heads of segments persisted as the home of groups whose interests they symbolized. The history of the segments and of the nation itself was embodied in the relationships enduring between successive headquarters.

When a small segment was founded it was usually manned by
557 people drawn from the rump of the immediately superior segment,
611 that is, from those men and women in the superior segment who
621 had not already been allocated to some inferior segment within it. However it is clear that this rule was often over-ridden. When the
[622] lord of a large segment formed a new inferior segment for a wife or son he was able to command the services of everyone within his

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could assemble for hunting and fighting, similar to the sectors attached to chiefly villages among the Zulu.[6] 561 701

Women were organized into parallel age-sets, led by daughters of the royal line and other important young women. Men and women of corresponding sets danced together on ceremonial occasions, and among themselves women in a regiment used to fight 'to see who was strongest'. After marriage a woman ceased to participate actively in these regimental dances and fights. [562]

The most important national festival was the first fruits ceremony held annually at the headquarters of Zwangendaba's great wife's segment. This was organized on an age-set basis, and there was much competitive dancing. Special songs were sung, and on conclusion of the ceremony a large national raid might be undertaken. 561 796 [726]

The Ngoni depended largely on the efficiency of their army for the continual inflow of captives on which the strength and continued existence of the State depended. The age-set system provided them with an efficient army, and in addition was a means whereby the centrifugal tendency inherent in their segmentary system was partly checked. 561 701 727

Each major segment had members in each regiment, and each regiment was drawn from every major segment. It provided the central authority with an instrument by which the segments could be held together, for on national raids the young men of every segment were in danger. No one segment, save the State itself, could claim the glory for a successful battle, but only the regiments involved. The Paramount Chief did not possess a complete monopoly of force, for we have already noted that sometimes segment heads organized their own raids. But these were small affairs, 561 701 621 [643]

[6] cf. Gluckman, 'Kingdom of the Zulu', p. 31.

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(a) Mpezeni I's regiment. Lancaster says Mpezeni I was in Mayunge.
(b) Nsingu's regiment.
(c) Mpezeni II's regiment.
(d) Msola. Wiese and some of my informants support the earlier position; Lancaster and other of my informants support the later one.
(e) Msiyiza. Lancaster and one of my informants support the earlier position; a more reliable informant supports the later one.

[114]

Wiese gives two other regimental names. His Madouda or Madoda is merely the status term *madoda*, meaning 'mature, respected and important men'. His other regimental name, Madginga or Madjinga, is probably also a status term, meaning 'very old men'. Rangeley has the names Tatakalulu, Mang'ombe, Izimpisi, Makebe, Mahacu, Zimfezi, Manyoni. [559]

Sources: twenty-three independent informants, offering partly conflicting accounts; Wiese, 'Expedição', p. 477, and 'Geschichte', p. 195; Lancaster, 'Chronology', p. 82; Rangeley, 'Mtwalo', p. 30.

[Footnotes pertain to Table III, page 38. - Analyst]

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631 The title of regional governor was also awarded by the Paramount Chief to certain of his favoured lieutenants. These promoted lieutenants, with their segments, retained their positions in the residential system unaltered but they were allowed to keep their own captives, a privilege of all regional governors. It seems probable, from incomplete information, that there were about a dozen regional governors of one kind or the other in the Fort Jameson group in 1898.[11] Despite the early date at which some of the regional governors' segments were formed during the migration, they did not expand as rapidly as did the segments led by the chief's queens and lieutenants, and in 1898 they comprised only a small portion of the State. In this respect the Ngoni of southern Nyasaland were organized differently, for there Read writes that the whole country was divided among regional governors, save for a central capital.[12] One of my informants stated that the head of a segment containing more than one village was never known as the lieutenant of his lord but was called, if he were not a kinsman of his lord, by the title regional governor. This is not true to-day, and in view of the large number of present-day commoner villages which claim to have been founded before the conquest, and whose heads are not regional governors, it seems unlikely to have been true earlier. On the other hand, all regional governors to-day are lords of segments containing more than one village, and this may well have been true before 1898 as well.

[554] [301] There were other minor honours similar to the title of regional governor and often awarded to the same people. These were the right to use the royal descent name *jere*, the right to a special praise name *nkhoma*, and the right to wear ox bones as a decoration.[13]

645 631 Wiese mentions certain special lieutenants who carried out tasks comparable to those of ministers of State. He describes three officials, one a minister for the interior, apparently responsible for the Paramount Chief's domestic affairs; another a minister of war who was also high priest; and the third a master of ceremonies at national festivals. He says that the ministers carried out these special tasks in addition to their ordinary duties as lieutenants, and gives the names of two of the three, who were the first lieutenants of two major sections.[14] Thus although there was some differen-

[11] See Table VII. The sample used in this table contains more villages founded by regional governors than would occur in a representative sample.

[12] Read, 'Standards', p. 16.

[13] Bruwer, *Mbiri*, p. 23; Wiese, 'Expedição', p. 479, and 'Geschichte', p. 198.

[14] Wiese, 'Expedição', pp. 469-70 and 'Geschichte', p. 188. These two men were the first lieutenants of segments 14 and 4.

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kept at his village. Although his lords, and ultimately the Paramount Chief, had rights in the cattle, their day-to-day care was his responsibility and he had in practice the greatest say in their disposal, either for consumption, for payment of bridewealth, or for damages awarded against a member of his segment. He was head of the most clearly demarcated local group and was responsible for it to the heads of superior segments. The village was the cattle-herding unit, but for agricultural tasks it seems probable that in large villages the co-operative unit was the division. Agricultural work was directed, at least so far as women were concerned, by the lady of the division. I have no clear information on how domestic tasks such as cooking were organized within the village but it seems probable that individual women cooked for their husbands and for the children in their care.[18]

Fraser writes of the Ngoni of northern Nyasaland that a village headman had special ritual duties to perform when his village shifted to a new site, and Rattray reports a similar procedure for the southern Ngoni. Wiese mentions an oracular method of selecting a new village site among the Fort Jameson Ngoni, but is silent on whether or not the headman had a special role to play.[19] I could gain no information from my own informants about former practices, but nowadays the headman has no specific ritual to perform when a village shifts.

There is little evidence about the number of villages in the Ngoni State. There are a few conflicting observations on population and size and number of villages in the Fort Jameson group at the time of the conquest,[20] and we have estimates for the population of different groups in recent years, but estimates of the population and number of villages at earlier dates are all highly speculative.

The term for lieutenant, *nduna*, was used at all levels in the residential system and was applied even to men who had not yet founded their own segments. As already mentioned, a lieutenant was a quasi-related dependant, not a kinsman, of his lord who was selected to be in charge of a section of his lord's dependants and to carry out the instructions of his lord. Some of my informants referred to a ceremony at which a new office of lieutenant was created and a feather placed in the hair of the newly appointed man, but others appeared not to have heard of this custom. The

[18] Barnes, *Marriage*, pp. 15*f*. For the Ngoni of southern Nyasaland, see Read, 'Standards', p. 16.

[19] Fraser, *Primitive people*, pp. 203*ff*; Rattray, *Folk-lore stories*, pp. 36*ff*, 109*ff*, 196*ff*; Wiese, 'Geschichte', p. 199. In his 'Expedição', p. 480, Wiese associates this method only with a change of residence by the Paramount Chief.

[20] See pp. 103*f*.

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114 121 is quite possible for the sub-divisions of a centralized state to have a segmentary social organization'.[35]

This unfortunate muddle is not helped by the use of the adjective pyramidal to characterize the social organization of primitive states, for when we need a visual symbol for a segmentary system as found in stateless societies, we use a triangle or pyramid.[36] There is, on reflection, an obvious difference between one office-holder having authority over a number of subordinates and one segment containing lesser segments within itself; but this difference is obscured by the similarities of spatial metaphor.

Under these circumstances, it seems best to eschew the use of pyramidal or segmentary as unqualified descriptions of either group of societies, and to follow the authors' alternative suggestion by speaking of Group A societies as primitive states, and of those in Group B as stateless societies. The presence or absence of a segmentary political system may now be handled as a separate question, providing a classification cutting across the division into states and stateless societies.

642 We have spoken throughout this chapter of Ngoni society as a state, and this usage is in accord with the definition of a state given [643] here. The Paramount Chief with his lieutenants exercised supreme [622] authority, there was a highly organized administrative machine, and there was an organized method of settling disputes within the [556] State. There were only slight variations in wealth except in the [554] control of cattle, but privilege and status were expressed in the residential system and were inseparable from the exercise of power and authority.

121 631 The presence or absence of a segmentary political system can itself be divided into two questions; was there a segmentary system, and if so, was it the political system? If we have used the term segment correctly, then it is clear that the Ngoni did have a segmentary system, and that political relations within, but not without, the State were largely regulated by it. However, when Fortes and Evans-Pritchard use this word segmentary in their typology they are referring exclusively to lineage segments, or to major groups very similar in form to lineages. A segment of the Ngoni residential system was not quite the same as a segment of a lineage, and we must therefore examine what may usefully be meant by the term segmentary as applied to a social system before we can answer these questions.

[35] Fortes, *Dynamics*, p. 234.

[36] e.g. Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer*, p. 201, and Fortes, *Dynamics*, p. 34, diagrams.

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before it can be moved further. The same accumulation of snow then begins again with each fragment.

We can readily see that this system was one of great flexibility. The rules of the system were fairly definite, and the principles of agnatic descent and primogeniture were never violated. Yet it was a system very susceptible to manipulation, and one appropriate to a society with a rapidly expanding population recruited mainly by capture. The relationships between a man and his wives, his sons, and his other dependants provided the basis for differentiation within his segment, but they did not determine in advance which wife should be made leader of a bevy, which bevy should get most dependants, which of his younger sons he should favour, which dependants he would appoint as lieutenants.

Without a continual inflow of captives this wide pattern of segmentation might not have produced anything more than a lineage system on the same lines as the Zulu and Swazi. The captives were the bulk which swelled the segments, which benefited one segment at the expense of another. This system provided quasi-agnatic affiliation to people whose actual parentage was unknown or irrelevant. Because of this source of supply, much greater segmentation was achieved in each generation than was possible in an orthodox lineage system. The whole system lasted only seventy-seven years for the Fort Jameson group, corresponding roughly to three generations, yet almost the whole population of the Ngoni groups stemming from Zwangendaba, numbering perhaps half a million people, could at the end of that time trace quasi-agnatic ascent back to him or his forebears.

Membership of age-sets gave rise to one set of bonds which cut across the lines of segmentary division; those bonds created by marriage gave rise to another. A man in one segment was linked by ties of affinity to men in several others, and because of these ties interacted with them on formal and informal occasions, exchanged cattle with them, and had a joint interest with them in their common descendants. Though segments were not exogamous, a wife from a structurally distant segment had in general a higher status and was more likely to be selected as leader of a bevy than was one from the same minor segment as her husband. Within a segment a son of the lord might marry the daughter of a lieutenant, and lieutenants sometimes married daughters of their lord, thus blending the bonds of affinity with those of quasi-agnation. As the heads of segments, married women played a more important role than we usually associate with them in strongly patrilineal societies. The lady of a segment retained her connexion with the segments

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had one son who died unmarried. The heir of Mpezeni I next after Nsingu was, therefore, the eldest son of the third wife in segment 10. This man's position in segment 10 was, therefore, equivalent to that of the eldest son of the second wife in segment 14, who was the second heir in that segment. Of these two second heirs, the latter, in the less important segment, was able to establish himself as the chief of county 17 whereas the former, in the more important segment, succeeded merely in becoming a village headman. Similarly, some lieutenants managed to become chiefs, others of comparable status did not. Wiese mentions six lieutenants by name. One of these became a chief, the other five did not. The segments of two other lieutenants, not mentioned by Wiese, became county segments and one other lieutenant became chief in the county of his lady's segment.

The evidence, therefore, suggests that we must look upon this transition from one system to another as no simple procedure by which indigenous forms of organization are taken over largely unchanged by a colonial administration. The change from an isolated expanding system based on warfare to a large-scale quasi-static system based on subsistence production and migratory labour provided opportunities for advancement for those who could adapt themselves more quickly than their neighbours. In one sense the really significant change came not in 1898 but in the 1920s, when the pattern of alignment became fixed. In the intervening period Ngoni society was still fluid, and an ambitious man had hope of securing advancement even as he had in the old days before the conquest, even though that advancement was achieved by different means and in a different context. It was after the twelve counties had been fixed, when it became clear that no more chiefs were to be made, that social mobility declined. With a rapidly changing external environment it was unlikely that this static condition would last, and with the growth of the Native Authority bureaucracy a new opening presented itself. Recently there are indications that further openings for the ambitious are being provided in the formation of parishes and in other schemes of rural development. But there are no new chiefs, even as there are no new plumed warriors for them to lead in battle or on whose behalf they can intercede with the tribal ancestors. Leadership in a society of half-peasants, half-proletarians, is based on other interests.

The salaries of chiefs are determined at an annual budget meeting held by the District Officer and attended by the chiefs and a few other men. The general outline of the tribal budget is suggested by the Administration, but on items of interest, such as

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paid more than 17, as befits the fact that segment 14 contains segment 17, and similarly 11 is paid more than 16.

From another point of view we see that the sizes of the counties, in terms of the number of villages, are in accord with the segmentary alignment, although here we have to remember that we are dealing not with the county segments, residual or primal, but with the counties themselves, each containing villages from many segments. Yet despite this complication, it remains true that the status of a chief, as measured by the number of villages he controls, is in conformity with his position in the segmentary residential system. It may well be that during the early administrative period fortune favoured those leaders whose *de facto* following was in agreement with their position in the old political system. The use of hereditary names emphasizes the connexion of the minor chiefs of to-day with the pre-conquest State and to some extent reflects their traditional alignment. Apart from county 16, where the hereditary name changed when a chief was succeeded by his brother, all the hereditary names refer to the first holders of the chieftainship, though not necessarily to the first leader of the county segment. Thus, for example, segment 5 was founded by Lomapela, brother of Zwangendaba. When the British Administration began, segment 5 was led by Zulu, a son's son of Lomapela. Zulu was recognized as a chief by the Administration, and the name Zulu has been adopted by the two chiefs, his sons, who have succeeded in turn. Similarly, segment 15 was founded for the lady Kukuya Kupili twala, a wife of Ntutu Mpezeni I. Her eldest son, Sayili, was recognized by the Administration as a chief, and this name has been inherited by his son and son's son who have succeeded him as county chief.

We should not infer from the conformity between the position of chiefs in modern and traditional terms that the present system is maintained solely by values surviving from before the conquest. This is plainly not the case. Our point here is that in this particular respect traditional values do not clash with those of the new order.

### 6. *Counties as territorial units*

We have seen that during the period of migration there were no lasting boundaries, and that political allegiance outlasted changes in geographical location. This state of affairs continued for some time after the conquest. The moves that were made were much shorter than in previous times, but the same principle applied. From 1900 to 1930 many villages moved from one site to another as land was alienated to Whites, as the boundaries of proposed

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delegated a certain amount of responsibility, such as the collection of licence fees or the holding of a court not recognized by the Administration but supplied by the county clerk with the apparatus of official forms. The would-be chief then argues that the rural district in which he lives has always been distinct from the rest of the county and that it is too far for the people in it to attend at the county court. No attempt of this kind since 1920 has been successful, although the recent dispersal of villages into reopened land outside the reserves has increased the distances some litigants have to travel to the county court, and hence the number of disputes referred to these unrecognized local leaders has increased.

### 4. *The chief and his people*

The chief interacts with his people in a variety of situations. He receives their presents of beer and other valuables, he presides at county meetings, and organizes the royal hunts. He visits them in their villages when there are important celebrations and festivities and they go to him with their requests and complaints.

Ngoni offer beer as one of their principal expressions of hospitality, and in a formal beer party the ordered pattern of the social structure is acted out in the distribution and dispensation of the various jars and bowls of beer.[11] One traditional obligation is to provide a jar of beer for the head of the segment. Everyone belongs, or belonged, to a hierarchy of segments so that there were many people who ought to be honoured in this way at every party. In practice, since beer is heavy to carry, few jars move outside the village in which they are brewed, but a distant political superior is sometimes called in to a village to attend a beer party at which he will be honoured in this way. In the chief's own village the chief lives close at hand and beer is provided in much the same way as for the headman in an ordinary village. When beer is brewed by important people in the capital and regal villages they often call the chief to come and visit them and enjoy their hospitality. The chief is not so frequently called to beer in commoner villages, but on an important occasion such as the formal installation of a village official, or the formal announcement that a village has moved to a new site, it is appropriate to invite the chief to attend. A chief may also be honoured by his affines with beer brewed for him in the same way as any other man, but there is some disagreement about the appropriateness of this, for the chief 'has exceeded all others'

[11] See Barnes, 'Fort Jameson Ngoni', pp. 217-19, for the rules of and attitudes towards beer drinking.

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and is not to be treated as if he were the mere husband of a kinswoman. Indeed, all marital affairs of chiefs tend to have political significance; they are much discussed in the tribe and are the particular concern of senior lieutenants of counties. A recent incident illustrates how in relations with his affines a chief is bound by the instructions of his political advisers. A chief hit his wife while drinking beer in her brother's house. Her father reprimanded him. At a meeting held to discuss the quarrel, the county lieutenants and a kinsman of the chief, his father's deputy, ordered the woman's father to pay two beasts to the chief. The chief himself said nothing. A week or so later the man offered the beasts to the chief who said he did not want them. Just over a year later the chief's kinsman complained to the chief that the beast[12] had not been paid. The chief replied that he did not want the cattle and that at the meeting he had wanted his wife's father to be merely cautioned. His kinsman said that despite this he would call the lieutenants who had taken the original decision and get them to ask the woman's father why he had not paid. Hearing this, the man offered a beast which was accepted.[13]

Thus it is the chief in his position as head of a major segment and a county who is honoured with beer and whose marriages are protected, and not the chief as a bibulous aristocrat. The chief himself does not drink all, or even any, of the beer presented to him but he is responsible for dispensing it. A chief who acts like a commoner and wanders through his villages seeking beer risks the reprimands of his lieutenants, for it is difficult to refuse a chief beer under those conditions. A chief should not visit his people's villages unless they invite him, or unless he has at least warned them of his intention.

The gifts received by a chief from returned labour migrants are sometimes cited as a modern form of tribute, but while these presents may be more expensive in pecuniary terms than beer, they do not have the same great social importance. The shirt or hat presented by a man recently back from Southern Rhodesia may bring him favourable attention from the chief, but the present is made by an individual and arises from his own political aspirations. So far as I could tell, such presents are not effective as bribes. On the other hand, the presentation of beer is an affirmation of a relationship between a social group, often a village or division, and a political office, and most of those affected directly

[12] At the meeting two beasts were asked for, but a year later only one beast was mentioned.

[13] cf. Barnes, *Marriage*, for the political significance of affinal ties.

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651 marriages and for selling beer, and from fines and fees taken in court. In some years there has been a local levy on all men liable for Native tax.

642 The Native Authority, the Native Court and the Native Treasury form a single system of what is essentially local government. The judicial aspect of government has always been to the 693 fore, for the hearing of cases is an activity which has gone on without serious interruption since before the conquest. The first people to be appointed as assessors were in many instances the people who had been hearing cases with the chief for many years. They were joined in this by the councillors, for there was no separation between judicial and administrative organization in pre-conquest times and none had emerged by that time. Since the court clerk needed to be at least partially literate, he was usually a younger man who had been to school but, in some instances at least, he had close kinship ties with those in high office. He acted as a member of the bench as much as the councillors and assessors. In some courts other close supporters of the chief, particularly those who lived near their courts, also attended regularly to hear cases although they were not paid to do so, and in at least one instance a chief paid a regular salary out of his own pocket to a member of his court who was not recognized as such by the Administration.

Thus the court was the nucleus round which the Native Authority grew. The court clerk was employed as secretary to the chief and the Native Authority, and he had charge of the rubber stamps which came to be the new symbols of political power. He toured the county looking for dogs and bicycles without licences, for since he was literate he was considered the man to handle the money accruing from court fines, fees and licences. Sometimes he combined with these duties others that had nothing to do with court work, such as seeing that villages were swept clean or paths hoed. Because of his work in court he was well informed on disputes in the county, and since he made frequent trips to the township so that his accounts could be checked by the Administration, he was well briefed on what was going on there. The office of court clerk [554] came in this way to have a greater importance than its formal duties implied.

Yet in recent years the relative status of the court clerk has declined. The executive, as opposed to the judicial and fiscal, 648 functions of the Native Authority have become more numerous. 645 The activities of the Administration, instead of being confined mainly to tax collecting and the punishment of major crimes, have expanded to include a variety of social services for Africans and

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closeness of the ties linking them to the areas in which they find themselves. To give two extreme examples, an agricultural demonstrator, after a few months in a rural compound, sought to marry a daughter of a near-by village headman. A policeman, sent to a village to investigate a murder, married a woman related to the dead man. Marriages of this kind are made partly because there is no other way by which a stranger in a village can be certain of getting enough to eat, but they also serve to broaden and diversify the relationship between the stranger and the people among whom he finds himself. Some of these marriages are terminated when the stranger is moved to another district, but there are a number of instances where Ngoni wives have gone with their stranger husbands to distant mines and towns. This process is, of course, merely part of the much wider one by which many Ngoni women follow their husbands when they leave their villages to seek work in Southern Rhodesia.

Similarly, chiefs and other important rural leaders endeavour to establish enduring relations with members of the African Civil Service. Some civil servants are their kinsmen, for one way by which a junior son of an important man can gain the position he desires but which is denied him by the rule of primogeniture is to enter the Civil Service or to seek advancement in one of the churches. Others are related by affinity, while yet others may go out of the way to offer hospitality to visiting political leaders when they need food and shelter in town. Some Ngoni civil servants maintain large households in the villages, which they visit at week-ends, and which they hope will have grown into recognized villages by the time they come to retire.

Thus there are two distinct groups of Africans concerned with public affairs, the African Civil Service and the Native Authority bureaucracy. They are in intimate association with one another, and both exercise considerable political power. Both are formally distinct from the old political system. But status in traditional terms, as chief or village headman or head of a division or cluster, is still recognized in the face-to-face relations of people generally, and hence there is a continual attempt to bring the two systems into congruence with one another. Clerks aspire to become headmen when they retire, while headmen aspire to be the fathers and fathers-in-law of clerks. This is no new development, for as early as 1907 Stigand reported that a Swahili, whose home was near Zanzibar, and who had been a soldier, had founded a small village close to Fort Manning.[20]

[20] Stigand, 'Natives of Nyasaland', p. 125. See p. 118.

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### 7. *Capital, court and chief's village*

634 We have spoken of the headquarters of the county segment as the capital of the county, and this is in accord with vernacular usage. Although each chief is head of his county segment, no chief lives in his capital village. Each has made his segment and set up a village of his own. This process continues with each successive chief, each making his own new village. When brick buildings [344] were made during the 1930s to house the newly recognized Native Courts, these were located near the villages of the reigning chiefs. Some of these are still in office, while others have died and their successors live in their new villages, some of which are as much as two miles away from the court. There are thus in some counties three foci of political interest. There is the capital village, the court, and the chief's village. Associated with each centre are different leaders and different activities. The capital village provides a link with the past, and in particular with that moment in the past at which the segment was founded. The Paramount Chief [643] retains special rights in his capital village and can make a garden for one year on the old site of his county capital whenever it moves to a new one. Most, if not all, capital villages are larger than the average village but the senior lieutenants of the county segments do not live in them, for like the chiefs, they have made their own villages. Nevertheless, the lieutenants who do live in the capital ● [554] are regarded as people of considerable importance in the county. Meetings are sometimes held in the capital but more frequently at the county court or in the chief's village. The court is the home of 692 the Native Authority, and it is there that the affairs of the Administration are discussed. An incident well illustrates the association of 648 the court with the Administration. I once called at the house of a 634 county chief who had not previously met me. He insisted that I 647 should go to the court to meet him there, as that was where he always met Administrative officials. County meetings are called at the court to discuss matters raised by the Administration in its letters to chiefs, and to formulate requests and complaints for transmission to the Administration. The court clerk, the Native Authority councillors, assessors, and messengers are much in evidence, while the traditional advisers of the chief, his senior lieutenants, may be in the background even if they are not silent. Meetings of this kind are usually called by county chiefs, but occasionally a meeting may be held open to the whole tribe. I have described elsewhere the procedure at a county meeting.[22]

[22] Barnes, 'Political development', pp. 107-9.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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and settled where another village already existed.[1] In both forms, this new settlement was called the *lusungulu* village, 'the one which goes in front'; and the village which was left was known as the *gogo* village. This use of the term *gogo* (literally 'grandparent') for house and village had a common basic connotation. It expressed the concept of being left behind to look after something, the *gogo* house being passed over for the heir to the Paramountcy or chieftainship but charged with ritual and ceremonial duties; and the *gogo* village being left behind to take care of the traditions and generally also of most of the widows of the deceased Paramount or chief. Each *lusungulu* village eventually divided on the death of its owner, part 'going forward' with the new successor, part remaining behind. The main groups in the village which went ahead or which remained were the houses connected with the new Paramount or chief or *mulumuzana* and those connected with his dead father. In the chapter on houses (Chapter III, Part III) this process will be examined in greater detail.

The third related institution was the provision for guarding the spirit of a dead Paramount or chief and those of some leading *alumuzana*. A senior woman was always guardian of such a spirit and in her hut were kept the ritual objects: spear, wooden dish, baskets, fire-stick, which were used in sacrifices to the ancestors. The guardianship of the spirit of a dead Paramount was always associated with the village which had been his *lusungulu*. His corpse was buried on the edge of the kraal containing the cattle of the house where he had grown up, and this village became the *gogo* village associated with him, where his spirit was guarded in a hut, probably though not necessarily belonging to one of his widows. The recognition of such a woman guardian was a matter for selection and appointment, and was the responsibility of the senior men of the *gogo* house in that village in consultation with the senior men of the *gogo* house in the dead man's father's village. The concept of guarding the spirits of important men, and the means by which such guardianship was practised, will be more fully discussed in Part IV in connexion with the ancestor cult.

## THE NGONI KINGDOMS AND AFRICAN POLITICAL SYSTEMS

In the final section of this chapter we shall look at the Ngoni kingdoms in their relationship to other African kingdoms and states such as those described in *African Political Systems*.[2] A methodological problem arises here. In this study a number of references are made to the Ngoni kingdoms in pre-European times, especially in connexion

[1] This form of the institution was found in densely populated areas and the incoming households dominated the original ones.

[2] Fortes, M., & Evans-Pritchard, E. E. (ed.). *African Political Systems*. O.U.P., 1940 pp. 9–23.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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A widespread variant



on virilocal residence will be discussed later and illustrated in Chapter IV of Part III. 591

(*b*) *Village pattern*

There was a traditional pattern of Ngoni village organization, which consisted in the siting of the huts in the village and the corresponding social groups formed in the different sections. Informants made it clear that when the Ngoni first settled in the areas where the two kingdoms now exist, the royal villages and the chiefs' villages were very large. Segmentation of these large villages, not only by the *lusungulu* 'going out' as already described, but also by sections of the village breaking off, began before the Europeans came and continued after their arrival. In the 1930's the traditional pattern was sometimes altered by a desire to build a 'model village' laid out in lines instead of in a horse-shoe curve round the kraal. Even in some of these model villages the grouping of huts, though no longer in a series of circles, indicated the house affiliation of their owners and their relationship to the head of the village. 621

The traditional ground-plan of an Ngoni village was based on the main kraal which occupied the centre. The gate of the kraal was on the open end of the horse-shoe formation, and the most important hut, the *indlunkulu*, was at the top of the kraal. On either side of the *indlunkulu* were grouped the huts belonging to the houses associated with the wives of the owner of the village. Behind the *indlunkulu* were the huts of his married sons and those of his brothers who chose to live with him, and this group of huts, known as *cigodlo*, spread round behind the main huts of the owners of houses. Behind each house-group of huts were the huts of the *induna* associated with the house; in large villages he often had a kraal and reproduced a similar small village plan in his own circle of huts. On the wings of the village, curving towards the gate of the kraal and called by the Ngoni 'the horns of the village', were the less important families in the village. The general principle of the village plan in terms of social status and the siting of huts was that the nearer huts were to the *indlunkulu* the higher was the prestige of their owner. The following very much simplified plan of an Ngoni village illustrates the principle of siting the huts in relation to social grouping, as it was when a new *lusungulu* village was set up. In this plan the *indlunkulu* hut was owned by the mother of the owner of the village, one of his father's widows who moved out with him. When she died the big wife on her right might move into the actual *indlunkulu* hut, or stay in her own hut while another widow of her father-in-law entered the *indlunkulu*. There was no invariable rule for this type of succession, but there were only these two possible alternatives. Reference should be made here to one other hut site—that of the *laweni* or boys' dormitory. It was usually sited behind either the big house or the *gogo* house, far enough behind [617] [554]

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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# CHAPTER I

## THE MILITARY FOUNDATIONS OF THE NGONI KINGDOMS

After the Ngoni settled in Nyasaland their political system went through three main periods of change and development up to 1939. The first was that of pre-European days, characterized by the military kingdoms. The second was the period of direct British administration, when the chief features of the Ngoni kingdoms were latent and unrecognized. The third was the period from 1933 onwards when the passing of the Native Authority and Native Courts Ordinances gave recognition to certain traditional forms of the Ngoni political system. Since, in their early forms, from the middle of the nineteenth century onward, the Ngoni kingdoms were founded on conquest, the maintenance of military power both for defence and aggression was an essential condition of their survival. We shall therefore begin the examination of the Ngoni political system with a chapter on their military organization. Men of the Swazi and of trans-Zambesi clans were proud of the part their fathers and grandfathers had played in Ngoni wars. These wars were recalled to the people in the recitals of oral tradition and in the songs and dances which were part of Ngoni culture. Cibambo, who has already been mentioned as the historian of his people, wrote for me in English the following account of Ngoni warfare in the old days, part of which, written in Tumbuka, was used as a reader for the schools in the Livingstonia Mission area. Cibambo had, as a young boy, seen the preparations for war, and had gone more than once as a carrier for his elder brothers who belonged to one of the last formed regiments.

### Ngoni Warfare in Old Days

¶ To the Ngoni war was like work and his heart rejoiced to think of it. When the old men sat in the kraal the talk that roused discussion was of war and their journeyings. All the heroes of the tribe had received their praise-greetings through service in war. In this, ordinary people and slaves came together, for though they might have been unknown to begin with, if they were heroes in one or two wars the whole country knew them. The slaves who showed their courage and strength in war quickly received their freedom and many also had villages of their own because of the people they had captured in war; others obtained the standing of men in authority. Those who were cowards were humiliated and laughed at, and those who had not entered the enemy stockade or killed a man were not allowed to dance in triumph in the kraal but only to join in the *ligubo* dance along with others.

[p. 28 is blank]

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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relationship, described in terms of brotherhood, and this brotherhood was further emphasized by the ban on inter-marriage between the Ngozo and Maseko clans. The significance of the Ngozo boy, when he became a man, building in the *cigodlo* where the Paramount's sons built, was often stressed by informants. Though his huts were in this *cigodlo* section of the royal village, as if he were a son of the Paramount's family, the Paramount never said 'child' to him but invariably 'brother'.

In all the occasions of daily life, as well as in those of special ritual significance, the Ngozo boy stood or sat next to the Paramount. The Ngoni insisted that the status of a man or woman should be expressed in terms of sitting or standing in order of precedence. Sitting or standing next to the Paramount implied that that individual had the highest possible social status. The leading members of the Ngozo clan in their villages displayed an awareness of their social prestige which was very noticeable. This high rank was, however, in the past bought with a price —that of sharing in the dangers of the Paramountcy. This was acknowledged through the gift of cattle to the boy's family, sent at the time when he 'entered the chieftainship' with the Paramount.

The institution of the royal shadow came to an end with the advent of the Europeans. An Ngozo man acted as a royal shadow on the accession of Cikusi but did not die on his funeral pyre. When Cikusi's son Gomani I was installed as *inkosi*, an Ngozo boy 'entered the chieftainship' with him and stood with him 'in the smoke of the *tonga*' when the army went to war. It was this Gomani I who was killed by the British, and there was no royal ritual at this death, and no cremation in a stream in which the Ngozo boy could share. The royal shadow retired in those troubled days to his father's village, where he died in 1937. It was alleged that no Ngozo man stood in this relationship to Gomani II, either at his accession, which took place during the period of Direct Rule, or in 1933 when his Paramount Chieftaincy was recognized. Informants showed a certain hesitation in answering direct questions on this topic, which was attributable partly to the fact that the Paramount was a Christian, and partly to a reluctance to discuss the continued use of 'royal medicines'. The following account of the royal shadow was given by informants of the Nzunga and Ngozo clans.

¶ When the Paramount entered the chieftainship he stood with a man from the Ngozo clan. The Ngozo people are of one blood with the Paramount, because they stand together when entering the chieftainship. When the Paramount of the Maseko dies, he dies together with one of the Ngozo. It was so when there died Ngwana, Mputa, Cikusi.

When the Ngoni came into this country they stopped killing an Ngozo man when the Paramount died. When the Paramount died a young man of the Ngozo clan just stood beside the body of the Paramount, and when making the funeral pyre of the Paramount, he also was there until they set fire to it. If anyone wanted to kill an Ngozo man by the

644 643 361 643 554 644 [595] [592] 643 644 512



royal women. In the royal villages in the 1930's there was one big *induna* and several lesser ones whose position and functions will be described in Chapter IV.

This 'going out' of the new Paramount's village, leaving the former Paramount's village as the *gogo* village, brought about some re-distribution of authority, prestige and material goods. It gave the new Paramount his own village, always to be known as his, even after his death. His village became the focal meeting-place for the territory and for the court and territorial officials who surrounded the Paramount; and it was to the new royal village that the *alumuzana* in pre-European days came frequently to visit the Paramount and report to him on conditions in their areas. His moving out of the *gogo* village, on the other hand, gave his brothers who stayed there, and especially those of the *gogo* house, more freedom and authority within that village as well as responsibility for the conduct of all ritual matters relating to the kingdom. The Paramount's big wife had to take her place as the leading woman in the new village and to order the affairs of the wives attached to her house in consultation with the Paramount's mother. Cattle, beer and food for the royal household became the concern of the new village, and the *izinduna* and the royal women had to plan and manage the economy of a capital where political interests converged and where visitors and hangers-on were constantly turning up.

The following text by Chief Mtwalo Jere in Mzimba district, helped by Cibambo's older brother, describes the daily routine of the Paramount and his royal village as they had known it in their youth before the coming of the Europeans:

> The *inkosi* had to wash very early before the people came to see him. The *ingceko* was the servant who took care of washing the *inkosi*. He had to go with the *inkosi* to the bush and hide the faeces to prevent any bad person from getting the faeces. The *ingceko* was anyone whom the *inkosi* called for this, and must be one who walks well with the *inkosi*.
>
> Before leaving his house to go to the kraal the *inkosi* had to eat a little porridge. When he went to the kraal a calabash of beer was brought to him. When any beer was brought to the *inkosi*, the *ingceko* tasted it first to see if it was good. The *inkosi* asked 'Is it good beer?' and the *ingceko* said 'Yes *inkosi*' and gave it to the *inkosi* to drink. When the *inkosi* took snuff the big *alumuzana* could beg from him. The other *amadoda* could only touch their noses. Then the *inkosi* knew they were begging snuff from him. Where the *inkosi* sat a mat was spread, and on it was laid a leopard- or a lion-skin. This was called 'the chair of the *inkosi*'. On arrival the big *alumuzana* went straight into the kraal to where the *inkosi* sat and greeted him '*Bayete*', and sat down in front of him.
>
> The *inkosi* could not eat porridge except that cooked by his own wives. In his own hut he ate alone with one wife to serve him. His mothers also came with food every day. He ate twice in his own hut, early and late, and once in the kraal. When he ate in the kraal all could see him. He could

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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643 651 431 527 571 turn were invited to eat with the Paramount or summoned to special feasts. On the other hand there were people who seemed to have nothing, and who came in the hope of getting invited to eat food if they just sat in the kraal and looked hungry. Cibambo called them 'the notable people' and 'the poor people'. This contrast in behaviour ran right through Ngoni society and reflected the social standing of individuals who behaved in such different ways. There was a good deal of cadging for gifts and of gate-crashing at feasts on the part of people who had no intention, or no possibility, of making any adequate return. An Ngoni proverb illustrated the public attitude to reciprocal giving as distinct from begging: 'To say: Give, give, is to snatch. The child of a free man only gives.'

571 643 651 431 The bringing of tribute to the Paramount was only one aspect of the reciprocal relationships which ran right through Ngoni society, namely the bringing of gifts by a man in an inferior social position to his superior, with the expectation of receiving food or favour and of standing well with this superior. It was recognized that tribute was of two kinds, one of which was voluntary. If a *mulumuzana* or other notable wanted to please the Paramount he brought him presents—grain, flour, meat, beer. It was always emphasized that this was a free gift, with the added proviso that the giver wished to keep on good terms with the Paramount. Ngoni informants declared that the only compulsory form of tribute in pre-European days was that whenever a lion or a leopard was killed it had to be brought to the royal village through a succession of intermediaries, as described below.

These two principles of free giving and compulsory giving, and the attitudes engendered, are compared with the feeling about compulsory taxes under European rule in this text by Cibambo.

¶ Although people hate giving taxes to strangers in this land, yet tribute (*imitulo*) was given to their *inkosi* and to other chiefs. Such tribute was given in an indirect way, that is the *izinduna* did not mark out those who gave and who did not give tribute. The Ngoni did not wish that every male should give tribute as is done by Europeans today. They were just pleased if the village headman or *mulumuzana* had given something even though other people in his village did not give anything. Even the *alumuzana* themselves gave something at the time they thought it was convenient to themselves to give. There was no fixed time of the month or year. Much that was given as tribute was beer, meat, ivory, hoes and cloth, also cattle, sheep and goats after raids, and other loot from war.

[825] Power to 'eat' (*ukudla*) lion- and leopard-skins was given to certain people of the Swazi clans, but all the rest were obliged to bring them in. The lion- or leopard-skin had to be given first to the village headman. He went with it to the chief or *mulumuzana*. This one brought it to the *inkosi* along with his *amadoda* or *amajaha* of all his villages, the older men and younger men. This was like going as warriors and they went with dancing (*ligubo*). The one who first stabbed the animal was pointed out, and the

● [554]

second and third, and the finisher, at the place of dancing in the kraal. At such times each one when called rose and danced *umgiya*, repeating his names. This was called *ukubika izinkalipi*, reporting the heroes or the fierce ones. This is still being done today. The *inkosi* thanked the people who brought the skins by giving them a beast or a goat. When they were dressing the meat and eating it, they kept on dancing *ligubo* and crying the war-cry. At such times the women went along with the men to help them dance *ligubo*. They made the responses to the songs and jerked their necks.

All such things the *inkosi* divided among his houses. The big house had a big share, but especially his mother's house. She should have most. Even if his real mother was dead, the big share had to go there, to her house, where her successor lived.

Visits to the Paramount, whether for a particular occasion or as a matter of routine, were hedged about with ceremonial. It was expected that *alumuzana* and other important people who lived near enough would visit the Paramount frequently and, according to some informants, they went every day in pre-European times.

No one could approach the Paramount except through one of the *izinduna* of the royal village, and the correct person to approach was the *induna* of the *indlunkulu*. Visitors were expected to wait at the gate of the kraal and put down their spears. When they were brought by the *induna* to the Paramount, they greeted him with '*Bayete*'. Then they sat down and the Paramount told the *induna* to greet them, and they replied '*Yebo, inkosi*'. This custom of indirect approach to the Paramount has been maintained. Early travellers in Nyasaland spoke of observing it, and when I was there it was considered outrageous manners on the part of any European if he penetrated immediately to the presence of the Paramount, without going through the accustomed channels.

The Paramount was both greeted and thanked for gifts of food, beer or snuff, with '*Bayete*'. If he moved from the kraal, all present said '*Bayete*'. If anyone had to leave his presence, he crouched low and murmured '*Bayete*' as he went out. Cibambo described this punctilious formality of thanking for gifts in the Ngoni manner.

¶ When receiving presents the Ngoni thanked the giver by taking them with two hands, even though it was a small present. Afterwards they thanked the giver by his *isibongo*, clan name, openly. They said that receiving a thing with one hand showed that you derided it and did not put any value on it. When receiving a present from bigger people or from a chief, some words of respect were added to the *isibongo*, such as '*Baba*', '*Nkosi yami*', '*E-Jere*'. Often the receiver if he was much pleased with the present added some *isitokozo* to the clan name, if he knew them. Those near him or some further away helped the receiver by thanking loudly after him. If what he received was food, he thanked at the beginning, and after eating the food he thanked again. If such a present of food was given to a body of people, the leader in the company first led the others in

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614 *mulumuzana* was not invariable. Some informants said that *alumuzana*
622 were appointed by the Paramount. Others said that if the ancestor of a Swazi clan was known by name to have crossed the Zambesi with Zwangendaba or Mputa then his descendant in the direct line was always a *mulumuzana*.

614 It was the criterion of having a known ancestor and knowing the genealogy of the clan that was most widely accepted in acknowledging
[769] the head of a Swazi clan as *mulumuzana*. At the clan head village prayers were addressed to this ancestor, his cattle were sacrificed, and the names recited as far back as tradition and memory could recall. Later we shall see that there were said to be about 25 Swazi clans in the northern kingdom and 29 in the central. Among these about 15 in the northern and 12 in the central kingdom had head villages where the ancestor cult was performed. In the central kingdom several of the leading clans had their head villages in Portuguese territory, and therefore did not carry out the cult in the central kingdom.

554 In the hierarchy of the clans the Swazi clans were the acknowledged
614 leaders. In village and national life this leadership was accorded to the royal clans and the clans of the chiefs, and was the reason for the respect shown to *alumuzana* who had no direct political power. Only the heads of Swazi clans possessed *izitohozo* (honorific epithets) which commemorated events in the past history of the clan leaders. On all ceremonial occasions heads of Swazi clans, whether in national or in village affairs, took precedence over the rest when walking in procession, standing for dances, taking part in ritual, or sitting down at feasts. Certain
[766] forms of burial, such as the use of a sheep-skin, and placing the corpse on a shelf in the grave, were observed only for members of the Swazi clans.

582 In arranging marriages, there was, in addition to strict exogamy
614 within a clan, a prohibition on marriage between clans which had *cibale* (brotherhood) relations. In the central kingdom the royal clan, Maseko, had *cibale* with the Ngozo clan which provided the royal shadow, and
[762] with the Nzunga clan. The Nzunga and the Maseko clans shared the same taboos, notably elephant and fish. As well as prohibited marriages between certain clans, there were preferred marriages between certain others. In general there was a preference for marriage between the families of leading Swazi clans. In the northern kingdom the Nqumayo clan had a preference for marrying into the Thole, Nhlane, Maluleka and Pakati clans. It was alleged that formerly they could marry only into these clans, but in the 1930's exceptions were found in a number of villages.

614 The following lists of the names of Swazi clans were collected from informants in the two kingdoms, who were questioned closely about which names should be included under the title of Swazi. This was the grouping claimed by the Ngoni in both kingdoms. They said emphatic-

## CHAPTER III

## HOUSES

361 171 823 WRITING of the social organization of the northern Nguni among the South-eastern Bantu, Mrs. Hoernlé[1] referred to three divisions of the typical village: the *indlunkulu* section where the principal hut was that of the mistress of the village; the *ikhohlo* section on the left-hand side of this hut, and the *inqadi* section on the right. The terminology used by the northern Nguni expressed right and left hand from the point of view of someone looking up from the gate of the kraal. I found that among the Ngoni they used right and left the other way as if the person were at the top of the kraal looking down at the gate, and I have adopted their usage.

171 361 554 Ngoni villages, which were royal villages of the head villages of Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans, also had a tripartite division into houses related to leading women, as we saw in the village plan in Chapter III of Part I, but there was a major difference between them and the northern Nguni grouping described by Mrs. Hoernlé. In Ngoni villages the *indlunkulu*, the hut at the head of the kraal, was occupied by the mother of the owner of the village, who had 'come out' with him from his father's village. In the right-hand section of the huts round the kraal was the hut of the owner's big wife, and on the left the hut of his next important wife. These three huts, representing three houses, were the focal points of the main divisions of the village. In fact in most villages the owner of the *indlunkulu* had the huts of other widows of her late husband beside her on each side, and the *cigodlo*, or section where the sons of the owner of the village lived, spread over a wide area behind the *indlunkulu* and behind the huts of the two chief wives. The plan used in Chapter III of Part I was necessarily simplified in order to bring out the main points. The grouping of huts in typical Ngoni villages showed varying degrees of elaboration, and it was not always easy at first to trace their connexions with the houses.

592 571 Houses in the Ngoni kingdoms could be considered as divisions of the village, though they did not always cover all the divisions. If we look at the membership of a house, as it was illustrated in a typical Ngoni village, it is clear that it had in it three elements connected by ties of kinship, affinity or association with the owner of the house, who was either a wife or a mother of the male owner of the village. The kinship group related to the *indlunkulu* comprised the male owner of the village, his mother and classificatory mothers with his brothers who had joined him. In the big house and in the second house of his wives the kinship

[1] *op. cit.* p. 85.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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361 592 pattern covered two generations including the houses of the former chief and the reigning one.

The houses served several purposes in the organization of village life on the one hand, and on the other, provided an important instrument for regulating succession and inheritance, and for carrying out traditional ceremonies and ritual. It was the eldest son of the second house who would, if the *lusungulu* practice was followed, remain behind with the *gogo* village; and he was responsible for conducting traditional ritual and was expected to be able to carry out ceremonial procedure correctly. This was the main function of the *gogo* village and of the man who was head of the male members of the *gogo* house. The corresponding head of the male members of the big house was the owner of the village, and it was his eldest son by his first wife who would normally succeed him as chief or *mulumuzana*. The members of each house had a stake in the property of that house, particularly in the herd of cattle owned by it, and in any goods, such as cloth, bought by the sale of the cattle of the house. The house united the male members who belonged to it through this common ownership of cattle. In Chapter II of Part IV we shall examine further this aspect of belonging to a house.

554 592 562 In the organization of village life in villages belonging to chiefs or *alumuzana* the houses established the status of the wives of the owner of the village, and the status of those of his mothers who had come with him. His mother in the *indlunkulu* hut ranked first among her co-widows. The big wife came next, and the wife of the second house after her. Wives attached to the big house ranked above those attached to the second house.

571 592 627 562 The houses fulfilled their most prominent role in the day-to-day activities of the households associated with them. It was in these daily affairs and in planning for future events that the house organization provided the chief channels of authority. The exercise of this authority ranged from instruction in household tasks and emphasis on good standards of housekeeping to settling minor disputes arising from marital quarrels over property and over the custody of children. These minor cases could be settled out of court if the senior women showed that they knew how to listen to complaints and give advice which was accepted, with the result that good relations were restored. The main topics of discussion among the senior women on the verandah of the *indlunkulu* were the ingredients of these minor quarrels and disputes. If, by judicious handling, they could keep the cases out of court, they knew, and so did the village, that their authority was enhanced and their prestige more firmly established.

571 592 562 The authority of senior women was further reinforced through their organization of women's labour in household work and in cultivation. This authority in domestic affairs covered a woman's own household and the women and girls attached to it as household servants, the

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households of her co-wives who were junior to her in the house, and the households of her sons' wives. These women also decided when to undertake certain work in cultivation or in harvesting crops, when to brew beer, when to re-polish the floors of huts and the sitting place in front of the huts, when to replenish the stock of cloth, ornaments and beads, baskets and mats, which were part of the wealth of the house. Other occasions for the exercise of authority were attending and superintending women's confinements and the private puberty rite of the girls, advising on matters of health, and supervising the training of children.

All these activities of the owners of the houses were so much part of the day-to-day life of a village that they could pass almost unnoticed unless a detailed analysis were made. The position and authority of owners of houses was, however, immediately evident on ceremonial occasions. These included the pre-marriage ceremony of *umsindo*, which was abandoned after the Europeans came; the series of visits and exchanges leading up to the marriage ceremony, *mtimba*; brewing beer on a number of occasions, for dancing *ngoma* and *ligubo*, for funerals and subsequent ritual shaving, or for entertaining important visitors whose coming was expected so that beer could be prepared in advance. On all such occasions, the courtyard surrounding the *indlunkulu* was a scene of great activity. Men put on their war-dance equipment there; the beer pots were assembled there; meat and blood for feasts were cooked there, while the less important maize porridge (*usima*) was cooked in subordinate households. From the courtyard of the *indlunkulu* a procession of the *manina* (senior women) led by the owner of the house went out to greet visitors, to go to the beer drink, to take part in the dances, and to perform the ritual connected with births, deaths and marriages.

## Marriage in Ngoni Society

Earlier in this chapter it was said that a new house derived from the marriage of a leading man to his big wife. Since marriage was so closely linked with the continuance and development of houses, and since a new wife when married separated from her own mother's house and became a member of her husband's mother's house, I have included a discussion of marriage in this chapter on houses.

There were three main principles in Ngoni marriage. It was a binding contract sealed by the exchange of cattle; it established succession in the male line; it formed a link between leading Swazi clans. When we examine in detail the organization of Ngoni marriage we see that its objectives were to build up a series of inter-clan and inter-family relationships. These began with inter-marriage between the leading Swazi clans, in order to strengthen the political and social relationships within that inner circle of Ngoni society. The political allegiance of leading individuals from clans of non-Swazi origin was strengthened by marriage

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found opportunities for visiting the village and looking at the girl, and having decided in her favour, he then proceeded to court her along the following recognised and definite lines: 584

1. He courted the girl and if she was willing she eventually agreed to marry him.
2. He informed a member of the *gogo* house of his father's family, usually an older brother of his father.
3. This elder informed the man's father.
4. At the father's request, this elder went to the girl's village and sought out a corresponding elder of her family, usually an older brother of her father and always someone belonging to the *gogo* house.
5. This elder in the girl's village informed her father and mother and, when this was done, told the elder from the man's village, who then went home.
6. The girl's parents asked her if she agreed to the marriage and, if she gave her consent, they considered the matter and finally gave their consent.
7. The man's elder returned to the girl's village and the girl's parents told him they had consented and he then went home again.
8. He returned soon with a beast, called 'the snuff box', as a gift from the man's father. This elder now had several companions with him, but no one from the man's immediate family circle or from his house.
9. The beast was killed and the betrothal feast was held in the girl's village, after which her parents and the elders of her village said, 'We have snuffed.'
10. The man's father sent another elder to 'call the girl' and she was then addressed as 'daughter-in-law'.
11. The girl's father and his brothers decided what the *lobola* should be and informed the man's parents how many beasts they wanted.

Men of the *gogo* house in each village played the major part as go-betweens in the negotiations between the two families, opening the way for the new relationship which was felt to be full of difficulties. Once the betrothal feast had been held, the leading function of the *gogo* house gave way to more direct participation by the man's house, where the male members had now to find the cattle for the *lobola*, the amount of which had been fixed by the girl's family. This amount was in direct relationship to the status of the girl's family and clan. In the 1930's for a girl of the royal clan it was up to fifteen beasts; for girls of other Swazi clans from three to nine beasts; and for girls of non-Swazi clans from one to three—the variation depending on the status of her father in his village, and on the house from which he came. It was to the herd belonging to this house that the cattle of the *lobola* were allocated. The [554]

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as belonging to the houses. The relatively large number of cattle and the high ranking of the Nzunga clan accounted for the number of *lobola* marriages.

*Family structure in individual and group life*

As individuals and in family groups members of leading Ngoni clans claimed and exercised leadership in their villages. The leading families in the area of a *mulumuzana* owning a head village, and the small Ngoni family groups in a larger non-Ngoni setting, all expected and received 'honour' (*ulemu*). The tendency in the central kingdom to marry up, and in the northern kingdom to marry into the clan of the mother if it were a high-ranking one, emphasized the importance attached to the rank and prestige of certain clans. This attitude towards family prestige was more noticeable in the central kingdom where individuals were quick to announce who was their mother or wife if that information would enhance their reputation.

The leadership of high-ranking families was not only a matter of claiming prestige. It carried with it, on the male and the female side, responsibility for regulating the affairs of the village and the house and the *banja*. Quarrels had to be composed, if possible before they came to court, troubles over deserted wives looked into, provision made for hospitality and for keeping the village premises in order. Informants emphasized again and again that in Ngoni villages where many men and women were of Swazi clans, order and cleanliness were to be expected. This was not always the case, but it was strikingly illustrated in two of the villages referred to in this chapter—Endindeni in the northern and Mangozo in the central kingdom.

In day-to-day village affairs much mutual help was given by members of Ngoni families to each other, especially by the men to widowed mothers and sisters, and by the husband's brothers to wives whose husbands were away at work. The dislocation caused to the village economy by the emigration of males called for considerable organization on the part of those who were left. Ngoni male leaders of families and heads of a *banja*, and the women heads of the houses, all had to include the needs of these 'deserted' women in their own planning. In the northern kingdom, in spite of its relative poverty, better care was taken of wives whose husbands were away because the strong virilocal tradition emphasized this type of help.

In rearing and training children the Ngoni family structure and relationships provided direction and responsibility. We shall discuss in the next chapter on age sets the significance of birth and puberty ceremonies in Ngoni life. More significant, however, than any ceremony was the continuous provision for the training of children, adolescents and young adults in correct behaviour. This duty fell on the women as far as young children and girls were concerned, and on the men for the

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some for themselves as their perquisite. They then drove the cattle to pasture, and this might be some distance away when grass was scarce in the dry season. They sometimes drove the cattle back near the village to rest at noon under the shade trees, but if the pasture was far away the cattle rested there and went on feeding later. They were brought back to the kraal in the late afternoon and counted by one of the senior men.

The herd-boys taught each other to fight with sticks, to wrestle, to catch rats and small birds, to use the knobkerry, catapults, and bows and arrows. Sometimes in the afternoon they went to other villages and challenged another herd to a fight between bulls.[1] During the long day's herding, the boys used to drink milk, make *amasi* (milk curds) in a gourd and eat it, bake birds in clay and roast ears of maize taken from their mothers' grain stores. Precedence among the herd-boys depended first on age and only secondly on the rank and position of the families they belonged to. There was an easily recognizable air of authority and almost of arrogance among the older boys responsible for their fathers' and uncles' cattle. They superintended the process of letting out the cattle, milking them, driving them to pasture and the return to the kraal in the evening. Mounted on donkeys, wearing large straw hats made by themselves, the senior boys acted like ranch owners bossing up inefficient work hands.

This period of living in the *laweni* was, as we have seen, shared by boys of a wide age group. In a large village where there were two or three or four *laweni*, there was often one in each section, which generally meant that the boys belonging to one *banja* or section shared one *laweni*. This had the effect of dividing them up to some extent on a basis of family and rank, but in a *laweni* serving a whole village all the boys went in together whatever families they came from. There was no respecting of clan status in the *laweni* and young boys of high-ranking families had to wait on and obey older boys of lower rank. *Laweni* life was therefore a democratizing influence among the boys of the village, and no boys were excused from herding cattle because they belonged to a house which owned cattle. Even if some went to school and others did not, the school-boys had to take their share of herding in the holidays. Ngoni chiefs and leading men laid great emphasis on keeping the boys busy and making them carry out the work allotted to them. The older boys began to listen in at court cases and to discuss them among themselves. During the wet season from time to time they formed hoeing parties for clearing new ground and for the periodical weeding of gardens. They seldom did any continuous cultivation, as the women and the older men did, and a boy who liked to go off and hoe by himself was pointed out as one with rather peculiar tastes.

During this period of *laweni* life, when in addition to herding the

[1] For the relation between the training of herd-boys and preparation for war, see Part II, Chap. I, p. 30.

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and docility, especially to older women. This last was intended to stand her in good stead when she went to be married in a strange village and would be expected to show subservience to her mother-in-law. At the same time, since the girl belonged to a high-ranking clan, she knew, and so did those who were training her, that she would eventually have to exercise authority and teach others what to do and show them how to do it. She would also be expected to have a mind of her own and to speak out on occasions to her husband and, when she grew older, to rebuke women in her house or in her service if they did anything amiss.

In pre-European days, between the private puberty ritual and her marriage, the Ngoni girl went through another ceremony, the *umsindo*. This was a pre-marriage rite, and was in many instances followed almost immediately by marriage. It was held for girls of high-ranking families, though their companions from their own and other villages shared in the ritual. The ceremony was abandoned after the missionaries came, but many of the songs and the dances were well-known to the leading Ngoni women. I saw many *umsindo* dances in the northern and central kingdoms and collected a number of the songs which were still in use, some sung to solo instruments, such as the *igubu*, and others sung at funerals or at tribal gatherings. Those *umsindo* songs which referred to sexual intercourse and used expressions which were considered obscene, had been sung only at the ceremony itself. The Ngoni made a practice of referring to genital organs and to sexual intercourse in veiled language. As soon as the meaning of the terms became obvious, they were disguised by other allusive terms. The degree of obscenity in the actual words of songs was therefore very difficult to establish, but Ngoni informants were always clear about which could be sung in public and which only on occasions of licence or strictly in private.

The *umsindo* ceremony as a preliminary to marriage fulfilled certain functions. It was a public declaration that the girl for whom it was held had been examined and found to be a virgin, for it was not held for anyone who had been deflowered in earlier love affairs. It emphasized the social rank and the wealth of the girl's father, for only rich and important men could afford to hold *umsindo* for their daughters. It had a strong element of a *rite de passage* in it, for the girls were secluded in a hut during most of the ceremony, they fasted, they were given instruction by older women, and they were finally 'brought out' of the hut and adorned with parts of the beasts slaughtered, and with beads given as presents by friends and relatives. Perhaps the chief significance of the *umsindo* was the fact that it was a ceremony held for the girl in her father's village. It was an assertion of her membership in her own family and village circle, and of her father's status and of his regard for her. There is no doubt that the Ngoni women of high rank had a keen sense of their own importance and position; the *umsindo* ceremony

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in 1938.[1] The sociological and ritual significance of these factors will be the chief emphasis here, with reference to earlier chapters in this book on Ngoni culture and on the structure of Ngoni society.

In the sociological significance of cattle-ownership there are certain outstanding points to be emphasized, which will be indicated here and developed further in the analysis which follows. One is the connexion between cattle-ownership and status, illustrated by the dominance of the Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans in village life, since their possession of cattle was related to the kraal and to the siting of huts and to their house organization. The cattle horns on the roof of the *indhunkulu* were no trivial ornament. They were a proud assertion of cattle-ownership attached to the residences of the leading women, with all the implications of 'house herds' of cattle and of *lobola* given and received. Closely related to cattle-ownership and status was the power conferred by the possession of herds. The status of leading families was enhanced by the ability to give feasts, to give *lobola* for their sons' wives, to make sacrifices to the ancestors and, as we saw at the end of the last chapter, to realize cash by the sale of beasts belonging to the herd. Cattle-owners did at times have to decide whether to maintain and augment their herds and thereby be known as wealthy cattle-owning families; or to sell cattle in order to command labour to build a modern brick house, or to buy fine clothes for their wives and display their wealth in another form.

In the organization of Ngoni society, cattle were an important factor in uniting groups of persons. We have seen how the house, as a group of men and women, and its variant, the central Ngoni form of *banja*, had common possession of a herd of cattle which formed a source of wealth for all members of the house. Within the house the senior men were bound together by the responsibilities attached to the ownership and care of a herd. Within the village the senior men of a house or *banja* united in the upkeep of the kraal, the supervision of the herd-boys, the tending of sick cattle, and in meeting or resisting the Government's demands for culling or dipping stock. Where cattle were boarded out in another village, ties of association in the care of the beasts and in accountability for them bound together the cattle-owners or cattle-keepers of more than one village. A stage in the adjustment of a young wife to a strange village was reached when she added to the herd of the house she had married into the gift cattle given her by her father and so partly compensated for those which had been given to him by her husband's family. A new wife's standing in a village was thus advanced through any cattle which flowed in the opposite direction from those of the *lobola* cattle. Finally, and this is the main theme of this chapter, cattle were an essential link between the living and the dead.

[1] Read, M. *Native Standards of Living and African Culture Change*. Memorandum XVI of International African Institute, 1938.

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death, or he can give them to anyone he likes during his lifetime. Hence individual acquisition in the English sense involves the legal right of individual disposal; the individual possession of profits from such disposal; and the individual responsibility for complying with any regulations concerning cattle, such as inoculation, slaughter for foot-and-mouth disease, and testing of milk.

In Ngoni usage the concept of ownership involved the acquisition and disposal of, and the responsibility for, cattle, but behind this apparent similarity of terms lay a wide difference in interpretation. Cattle could be acquired by inheritance, by natural increase, by *lobola*, as payment in a court case, as a gift, or by purchase. Formerly cattle could be acquired in warfare and raiding, but never by purchase. With this exception of buying cattle for cash, the methods of acquiring cattle had not altered since the Ngoni settled in Nyasaland. In pre-European days in the Ngoni kingdoms only the Paramount, the subordinate chiefs, the *abamuzana* and the big *izinduna* possessed cattle. Having a herd marked the owner as a leading member of a leading clan, or as a famous warrior of a lesser clan whose distinguished war service had been rewarded by the Paramount giving him cattle, or allowing him to keep some of those he had taken from the enemy. New herds were formed when a Paramount or a chief moved out of his father's village and set up his own *lusungulu* village, taking with him one or more of his mothers who, together with his big wife, set up houses in the new village, and these houses were allotted cattle from the former undivided herd. Another way in which a herd was divided was when a big *induna* in charge of the house of a leading wife of a Paramount or a chief built a kraal for the cattle of that house near his own huts, and added to that herd any cattle which he acquired. Large Ngoni villages in pre-European days usually had one or more kraals on the edge of the village, as well as the big central one. When the large villages broke up and the *induna* moved off to found his own village, he still took care of the cattle of that house. If the house was one where an ancestral spirit was guarded, a successor was always appointed to live in the hut and guard the spirit. Hence the relationship of the house, its spirit guardian, its cattle and the *induna* in charge continued, though the personalities changed through death and for other reasons. This explained how in the 1930's cattle were found in one kraal which were said to belong to a house or a woman guardian of a spirit miles away in another village. Sometimes they were described as the cattle of a man long dead.

It is clear, therefore, that the Ngoni methods of acquiring cattle and building up herds did not result in a concept of individual ownership. Cattle were not willed from father to son, but the son of a Paramount or a chief, when he made his new *lusungulu* village, had the right to receive and to take with him the cattle of his mother's house; and the head of the *gogo* village who stayed behind also received and looked after the

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cattle never came back to the kraal in the evening without one or more of the senior men standing by the gate and watching them and counting them as they went in. Sick cattle were noted and the herd-boys questioned about them. Mating was observed and noted, but not regulated, though poorly developed male beasts were sometimes castrated by one of the men who had acquired skill as a cattle doctor. Such a man would also administer drenches and other medicines, but the responsibility for calling a *sing'anga*, the specialist in medicines, to perform a ritual for a sick beast was taken by the whole group. They also made the decision to call a *sing'anga* to protect the kraal against lions. On several occasions I was in a village where lions attempted to get into the kraal at night, and the next morning the senior men who were responsible for the herd discussed the efficacy of this or that man's 'lion medicine' and decided who should be sent for to make the kraal safe again.

Important decisions were taken from time to time about placing the cattle belonging to the herd of a house in other kraals. This custom of *kuikilila* (lit. to entrust) was common in the central kingdom and had been adapted to modern needs as one means of evading the cattle-tax by appearing to have few cattle, whereas a number were boarded out in other areas. This boarding out was a long-established custom of the Ngoni and was practised for various reasons. One reason, and probably the most important formerly, was to build up good relations with leading men in the outlying villages by entrusting cattle to their care. The reward if the cattle throve was often the gift of a beast, and this was one means by which men of local tribes could build up a herd. It was also a signal honour to have cattle entrusted in this way and it was acknowledged by sending to such a 'keeper' the head of any beast killed from this herd. Another reason for boarding out was to prevent diseases spreading among a whole herd all kept in one kraal, and yet another was a belief that certain men had latent power with cattle, and that beasts put in their care throve and multiplied. This emphasis on enlarging the herds by natural increase was the main motive for letting the calves have all the milk they needed in order that they might thrive.

### *The uses of cattle and cattle products*

Many of the uses to which cattle were put and for which they were greatly valued have been referred to in this chapter and in earlier sections of this book. We shall now examine the consumption of meat, milk and blood as food, and the forms of exchange in which cattle were directly exchanged or converted into cash. The ritual use of cattle will be discussed at the end of this chapter.

The testimony of early Europeans in Nyasaland and the accounts by the Ngoni of their life in the pre-European period agree in giving the consumption of meat, milk, and blood a high place in the diet of the cattle-owning families. It was a widespread European criticism in the

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178 The pressure on the Ngoni to possess ready cash was directly
231 related to their prestige in the villages and kingdoms, and to the status
437 of the Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans. Money was needed for good
554 buildings and good clothing, two of the modern signs of status which
[453] the Ngoni could not ignore. Faced with this situation, and unwilling, except among the urban Ngoni, to invest savings in banks,[1] they manipulated their cattle tradition to suit the new situation in several ways. In place of the frequent slaughter for food, there were occasional sales for cash. Money earned in wages was invested in cattle. The drive therefore was all the time to increase the herds, in order to be able to convert them into cash when the need arose.

*Values and attitudes in cattle-ownership*

114 Any attempt to probe below the surface of current practices in acquir-
233 ing, caring for and using cattle should be preceded by an extensive
565 survey of cattle-keeping, including the full implications of their place in the economy of Ngoni village and family life. Since a complete survey is not possible here, the assessment of the values inherent in the ownership of cattle and the resultant attitudes towards their acquisition and use is related in this chapter to the relationships between the living Ngoni and their ancestors. These values were primarily those of the senior men and women of Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans, and hence those of the aristocracy. They were reflected in the attitudes of groups who owned cattle in the villages. Further analysis would show variations in the attitudes of individual members of those groups who possessed cattle, and would also show an approximation to the Ngoni attitudes by members of other groups, for example, village headmen of Ntumba clans whose fathers had journeyed and fought with the Ngoni in the past. The spread of cattle-keeping beyond the former exclusive monopoly of the leading clans and of leading men in them resulted in a number of different attitudes towards the acquisition and use of cattle. Some of these variations were suggested earlier in this chapter in the brief comparisons of Cewa and Ngoni ownership of cattle.

231 The primary value of cattle to the Ngoni was the security they repre-
556 sented. This security lay in assurance of social position, in being able to meet penalties imposed by the courts, in the potential command of labour, in the enjoyment of much prized food, in the performance of ritual for the dead and in sacrifices to the ancestors. The converse of this security was the fear of losing cattle, and this was primarily a group attitude rather than an individual one. A man living in a town who had sent money to his father to buy cattle, and who heard that they had died, very often shrugged his shoulders when he heard of the loss and

[1] The Ngoni in Blantyre put about half of their savings into banks and sent the rest to their home villages to buy cattle.

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untrue, to say that all the prophets were false. Some were true go-betweens between the land of the spirits and the land of men. They received in dreams, sometimes in visions, things that related to the people of their time. God himself agreed to make them his workers and messengers even though these men sought for him in twisty ways. 791

The real go-betweens or prophets were called *isanusi*, 'those who smell something', and *abantu benhloko*, 'people of the head, people of dreams'. These men were considered to meet with the spirits in dreams or by their medicines which lifted them up to see the things of the spirit land. The people thought that these men received news from the spirits which they were to give to the earth people.

These men who had the gift of seeing in dreams were not allowed to live in big villages where there were often noises, but the chiefs sent them out to build for themselves a little distance from the chief's village along with their family. They were afraid that people would be disturbing them and making a noise when they met with the spirits. They were also afraid that in the big villages there would be many people who did not walk in an orderly way, and so these men, meeting those people, would spoil their own good sense.

These men did not talk with the spirits all the time. Often they did not receive any messages, but on other days their heads were stirred up and they spoke.

In the central kingdom there had been in the past the same distinction mentioned by Cibambo between diviners who dreamed, and those who used medicines to smell before giving their message. Informants said that there was also a distinction between those who took the initiative in announcing that they had something to say, and those who waited to be called for consultation. In pre-European days, in the hierarchy of diviners, the highest esteem was given to those who dreamed only (*abantu benhloko*) and who announced as a result of their dreams that they had something of importance to tell the Paramount. The Maseko line of Paramounts had, in the days of Mputa, a famous woman diviner called NaNdumbu who was of a Swazi clan. She went north to Tanganyika with the Paramount Mputa and was regarded as the *isanusi* for the whole country who foretold events as a result of her dreams. An informant who had seen her described her after she had had a dream or a vision coming into the *bwalo*, the open space in front of the Paramount's hut, and dancing with the little stick which the women carry in the *umsindo* dance. When the Paramount saw her dancing thus he came out to her and she spoke with him alone, telling him of her dream. Then, when the people around were silent, she lifted up her stick high with an outstretched arm, and the Paramount told the people what she had told him, and when they heard it they knocked their sticks on the ground and said '*e e e e*'. After she died her brother took her place as *isanusi*, and his daughter was living in Mcakhatha when I was there. This woman said of her father 'When I was young they told me "Your father has become [554]

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about a sick relative. He asked for a preliminary payment in cash from me before he would say anything in front of me, having already received the customary present of fowls from the sick man's relatives. There was an atmosphere of part pantomime, part reluctant performance in front of a stranger whose presence seemed to trouble him more than it did his clients. He wore a python-skin cap with beads dangling from it, and carried the tail of a black cow bound with lead and a small skin bag with the lots in it. At first he sat holding the tail in his hands and sniffing it occasionally. Then he suddenly shook the lots out of the bag—six large beans called *kulumo* and about twenty small round nuts called *mapi*. He put snuff on the top of each bean, sprinkled snuff on the nuts, picked the nuts up in both hands, shook his hands together and threw the nuts on the ground. Some fell near the big beans, others rolled between them. He looked intently at them, then at the group waiting to consult him. 'There is someone who is sick,' he said to them and the group replied '*Siyavuma*' (we agree). They continued to chant *siyavuma* in a low tone over and over again, with an almost mesmeric effect. He meantime went on to describe the sickness, that it was a pain inside the man (the chanting was loud), that it had been on the right side (less response), in the stomach (less response), on the left side (loud response). At intervals he waved the tail in the air and knocked the leaded end on the ground to emphasize the louder response. He did not specify the complaint but advised the people consulting him to go home and kill a goat as a sacrifice to their ancestors, and give the sick man some medicines which he would sell them.

It may have been the mixture of a real consultation with my visit which produced his slightly mountebank performance, and it may also have been his combination of the role of diviner with peddling medicines which the people present for the consultation evidently expected to obtain from him. This aspect of his performance impressed itself on the Ngoni informant who was with me. He was slightly contemptuous throughout, even when the songs were being sung and taken down. He kept on muttering 'This is Nsenga,' and said afterwards as we were going away that this diviner worked only for ordinary people and their sickness, as witnessed by his telling them to sacrifice a goat, and that he would not have been acknowledged by the real Ngoni. He was making comparisons all the time between the 'people of the head' and the diviners of this type, illustrating the Ngoni esteem for the real dreamers, and the slight, sometimes great, contempt for those who combined divining with recommending medicines as remedies.

The contrast between the performance of this diviner and that of the two *isanusi* whom I saw at work in the central kingdom was considerable. My long residence in Mcakhatha and the entrée I had to all that was taking place in connexion with the sickness of Bambo Manga no doubt helped to give confidence to the diviners. The chief and his

rocky outcrops. In September, several weeks before the rains begin, the trees burst out into red foliage, making scarlet rings and patches around the mountains and along the valleys, while through the hard-baked earth spring gladioli and orchids. This is the time of the bush fires when grass is burned and men and boys go hunting. The first rain storms bring a transformation. Fresh green grass covers the land, and scarlet leaves turn bright green on bushes and trees, and later marigolds turn the hillsides golden and yellow arums and red-hot pokers appear along the roadsides.

In making this high plateau their home, the Ngoni chose it primarily for the pasture lands for their cattle. They sited their villages on the ridges or the slopes of the hills, where they had a commanding position, with access to water, good land for cultivation in the shallow dips and river valleys, and woodlands where they could cut poles for their houses and cattle kraals.

The traditional Ngoni village was built in a horse shoe formation round a circular cattle kraal. Larger villages had a central kraal with huts round it, and several other kraals each with its horseshoe grouping of huts. A large village, and there were many of over a hundred huts, seemed at first sight to be a sprawling collection of huts and kraals, with a few tall trees about and several red ant-hills. A pattern of hut sites became apparent, however, once the family and kinship grouping was known. Behind each hut was one or more circular grain stores built on platforms, large ones for maize and smaller ones for millet or ground-nuts. In the Central Ngoni kingdom, and sometimes in the Northern kingdom, there were tall reed fences round the huts of leading families, enclosing an open space where household work went on, and wood and grass were stored.

There were two focal points in each village, reproduced on a minor scale in the hamlets round each kraal. One was the 'big house'[1] at the head of the kraal, where the leading woman had her home.

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small bitter thorn apple and mixing in castor oil. This was applied with a feather to the baby's navel.

When the cord dropped the baby's head was shaved, and the mother shaved a little hair round her temples. Then they washed carefully, using sweet-smelling soapy leaves, oiled the baby's skin, put on clean clothes, and came out of the hut door and sat on a clean mat outside. This first public coming out of the hut took place in the late afternoon, so that the men, after their work was finished, could come to 'salute the new stranger'. The husband and his brothers were the first to come, and this was the first time he had seen the baby. They brought small presents such as a fowl or a basket of flour, and always strings of beads which were tied round the baby's wrists and ankles, neck and waist. The word used for these little gifts was 'to give a present just for pleasing', and Ngoni Christians when speaking of such presents to new babies likened them to the gifts brought by the Magi to the infant Christ.

While the husband and his immediate kinsmen came to greet the baby at the hut door, the senior men of the village stayed by the gate of the kraal. After the cattle had come back that evening and the kraal gates were shut, the grandmother carried the baby to the gate and presented him to the senior men who responded by giving small presents to the child. This was always done if the baby was a boy, but sometimes omitted for girls.

When small children seeing the new baby on its mother's lap asked where it came from, they were always told that the mother had found it by the river in the rushes on the bank. The object of this reply, so Ngoni women said, was to hide the secret of birth from the children and stop them asking further questions. The Ngoni culture pattern of childhood innocence required that children should be kept in ignorance of birth and sexual intercourse while they were young. By adults therefore they were put off with stories of finding the baby on the river bank. As usual, however, in

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561 related to a young child by kinship, there were three distinct
855 age-groups. Nearest in age to him were his older sisters,
602 children of his own mother, of his father's other wives, and of his father's brothers' wives. When he began to talk he
[601] addressed all these as 'sister', or rather as 'my sister', and they took a kindly interest in him, especially if he were a boy and therefore to be removed from them when the time came for him to live in the boys' dormitory. They played with him, they sometimes carried him about while the nurse girl
[262] did something else, they ground bulrush millet or roasted ground-nuts to give him as snacks. They were particularly
[868] concerned with teaching him to speak correctly, to say the right names for things, to use the correct terms for older
[533] people, and later to sing the refrains of little songs in their singing games.

Above this sister group in age came his own mother and his other 'mothers', who were his father's other wives and his father's brothers' wives. All of them he was taught to
[601] address as 'my mother'. His father's sisters on the other hand, who took a special interest in his upbringing, he addressed as 'woman father', and the name implied some
● [554] measure of the authority which his father and his father's brothers exercised in the household and in the village.

Above this generation of mothers and woman-fathers came the grandmothers. Pre-eminent in supervising his life
[601] and the care taken of him was his father's own mother, but he also addressed as 'grandmother' his grandfather's other wives and his grandfather's brothers' wives.

The same triple grouping by age and generation, which
561 the child learned by degrees to distinguish among his own
357 kin, was repeated among the 'helpers' in his mother's and grandmother's households. There were young children who were the children of the household staff. His nurse girl and her fellow nurse girls formed a slightly senior group in this division, both by reason of their responsibilities as well as of their age. Above them, as the next generation, were the

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
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old Ngoni families, and shining like marble, as did the hut and veranda floors. On this polished space, or else on the veranda, the child's grandmother sat when callers had been announced, and from that vantage-point she could command the entrance through the surrounding fence, and agree to receive callers who had asked for admittance. Also in front of the hut was another drying platform which was large enough to offer shelter from the sun in hot weather; the dovecot where the 'royal pigeons' lived if the household was of the royal clan or distinguished enough to aspire to keeping pigeons. Off to one side was a hut for the goats at night and another, hoisted up on a platform, for the poultry. On the other side of the main hut were the grain stores, built up on low platforms. The maize stores were up to ten feet high and ten feet in diameter in these big households, and well-to-do women would have four or five of them bulging with maize cobs. There were smaller circular mudded bins for ground-nuts and millet. Behind the hut were two or three small huts where some of the helpers slept, and one of them was generally a kitchen hut. Piles of wood, and bundles of thatching grass bound neatly with bark rope, were stacked against the fence.

There were innumerable objects around the compound of interest to the small child prowling about. Two or three tall wooden pounding mortars, so heavy that they could not be lifted and had to be trundled on their circular base from one place to another, stood near the kitchen hut, or were moved to the front if the women pounding had to watch children there. There were much smaller mortars for pounding ground-nuts, kept when not in use in the fenced-in veranda; and one or more large flat stones for grinding finger millet and bulrush millet. Baskets were of all sizes and shapes from the small round food basket with a lid in which father's food was carried to the kraal gate, to the wide shallow winnowing baskets, the deep round carrying baskets some as large as two feet in diameter, and the porous baskets used as

### THE THRESHOLD OF ADULTHOOD (1)

When the boy's voice began to break, and his father or another older man noticed it, the second part of the ritual took place. The father's brother went to a senior man famed in the village as a herbalist and obtained from him several kinds of roots. These were ground and then cooked either in milk or in the cud from a goat's stomach, usually the latter, for the father liked it to be known that he killed a goat for his son. If the mixture was cooked in milk, a fowl was killed, and in either case the boy was given the meat to eat immediately after the mixture to take away the extremely bitter taste. The cooking took place on a small fire by the kraal gate in the presence of the male members of the father's house. The boy was told to dip the tips of his fingers in the mixture as it was bubbling in the pan and to lick them quickly. He was not expected to show that he found the mixture very bitter as well as hot to touch. At intervals the boy had to jump over the fire, hitting his elbows and knees with the palms of his hands. The more often he did this, the less often did he have to dip in the pan because the mixture soon dried up, but he had to continue dipping and licking till there was no liquid left. The senior men watched intently all through this performance because they believed the mixture not only helped physical growth and muscular strength but would prevent impotence. When this ritual was performed for the heir of a chief, it was followed by a war-dance in the cattle kraal and the boy had to take a second dose of medicine in the kraal surrounded by the warriors. In such a case a bull was killed instead of the customary goat, and the contents of its stomach used for mixing the medicine. The meat was eaten by the boy and his father's relatives.

As in the case of the girls, this boy's ritual was an occasion for asserting the authority of the father and his kin over the boy. For him there was however no separating off into another group after this maturing. He continued to live in the dormitory, herd cattle, and go to school as before.

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302 washing they applied the fat to their hair and combed it out, de-kinking it now and then with strips of bamboo bound tightly to the head. They scented their hair with the juice of sweet-smelling leaves, and dressed it formerly in the high chignon. As they gave that up, they took to wearing headcloths of different-coloured cloth so arranged that [301] headbands across the forehead could be worn. Ngoni girls needed no urging to take this beauty treatment very seriously, and before a big *ngoma* dance, gave it much time and thought.

554 Only the big wives and elder sisters of chiefs could wear
301 the necklace and headpiece of leopard or lion claws. They were the distinguishing mark of an Ngoni 'princess' or 'queen'.

### *The art of cleanliness*

181 I have called this section an 'art' because the Ngoni took
356 an aesthetic pleasure in achieving and maintaining certain
515 standards in their homes and in their persons, which were
182 held up to young adults as being highly desirable. This emphasis on a particular kind of cleanliness, while putting up with much that was not clean in their surroundings, was only one of several inconsistencies in Ngoni culture. The appreciation of a desire for this kind of cleanliness had not [751] necessarily any connexion with hygienic cleanliness. It was more closely associated with the Ngoni love of orderliness and scrupulous attention to detail in the appearance of persons and places. It was also connected with what they regarded as comfort and good living. The effect of mission teaching about health and sanitation, and of government [177] courses held for chiefs to instruct them in modern welfare measures, often caused confusion among Ngoni elders. Sometimes their traditional standards of cleanliness coincided with modern hygienic standards, and sometimes they did not. In any case it was seldom that Europeans recognized that the Ngoni had any standards to begin with, and they

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tion. In all the selection of individuals to 'enter the place' of an important person who had died, the new holder of the place had to measure up to Ngoni personality standards and be acknowledged as a 'good character'.

The new kinds of occupation open to Ngoni men as a result of education in the mission schools were of two main types: those where the holders of the job still lived in the Ngoni kingdom and carried on their work in the setting of a Ngoni village; and those which involved leaving the village and living and working outside Ngoniland, more or less out of sight and out of control of Ngoni elders.

Some of the mission teachers, ministers, and evangelists returned to live in Ngoni villages after they had completed their training, though others of course were posted elsewhere. In one of the villages described in Chapter I there had been in the early days of mission work fierce and continuous opposition to the opening of schools, as well as to the preaching of Christianity. I mentioned the old evangelist who had been threatened with death by the chief when he first took up his work. If he had left under those threats he would have lost out for ever among his people, for he would have been called a coward. He stayed, cultivated his land, grew his own food, was a great hunter, was respectful to the chief and elders, brought up his children to respect Ngoni traditions. He gradually gained the reputation of being brave, a 'gentle' man, a powerful and fluent speaker in the church on Sundays, a man of wisdom and judgement, and he was constantly asked for his opinion on village affairs. Most of the village, Christian and non-Christian alike, went to the church service on Sundays, sang the Ngoni hymns, listened to his sermons in the Ngoni language, sprinkled with Ngoni proverbs and illustrated by episodes from Ngoni life and history. Very few people in that village over twenty-five years old were Christians, but the leading Ngoni families allowed him to baptize younger and older children and to instruct them in Sunday-school. The Ngoni elders contributed to the

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159 797 church funds in cash or in kind, and helped to build the church and school.

159 875 The younger headmaster of the school had never been threatened with death. He came in on the tide of recognition and respect accorded to the character and behaviour of the evangelist. His grandfather, like the evangelist's father, had been a well-known warrior with his own praise song celebrating his exploits. When the chief saw the exemplary [622] [871] behaviour of the headmaster and his Ngoni wife, listened to some of the lessons in school, watched the boys 'drill' in the playground, he ordered all Ngoni boys and girls in the village to attend school, and arranged a roster for cattle-herding, so that the boys would learn herding as well as their school lessons. He sent for the headmaster to report to him periodically on how the children were behaving, and which ones were showing particular aptitudes. The young headmaster showed characteristic Ngoni ability to organize his school, control his staff, demand and get good behaviour from the children. He was, like the evangelist, a huntsman of repute, and he was too a good dancer, and had a judgement in public affairs that was acknowledged to be beyond his years.

177 797 871 186 The aversion shown in the other Ngoni village described in Chapter I to schools and to missions generally arose partly from the fact that there were no Ngoni teachers or ministers serving that area. The teachers in near-by schools were from a tribe whom the Ngoni despised and whose personal habits they deplored. The missions in the area had made no attempt to integrate schoolteaching and preaching in the churches with Ngoni life and thought. Some Ngoni fathers sent their boys to the Scottish Mission boarding-school in Blantyre, and were willing to pay the fees because they knew and believed in those in charge of that school.

871 463 554 Ngoni fathers, and this was true of both areas, expected their boys who had been to school and had entered European employment away from their homes, to find work which assured them a superior and not an inferior or unskilled

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position. They wanted them to be, or to become, senior clerks, trusted store assistants, valued houseboys, foremen in charge of other men, hospital assistants. They wanted them, in other words, to be in positions where Ngoni traits would be appreciated, and where good behaviour and self-control, ability to supervise others, responsibility and initiative, obedience to orders, would be recognized and rewarded.

In conclusion here is a record of a conversation I heard in the village of a very senior chief, so senior that he was given the title of *Inkosi* when his subjects addressed him. The chief, who was then in his seventies, but active and vigorous, was sitting in a chair on the veranda of his hut, out of the sun's glare, with several of the senior men of the village behind him. Two young teachers in charge of a school came to greet him. They bent one knee as they squatted in front of him, as they had been taught to do as children, gave him the customary greeting, and waited in silence till he spoke.

'How is your school?'

'The classes are full and the children are learning well, *Inkosi*.'

'How do they behave?'

'Like Ngoni children, *Inkosi*.'

'What do they learn?'

'They learn reading, writing and arithmetic, scripture and geography and drill.'

'Is that education?'

'It is education, *Inkosi*.'

'No! No! Education is *very* broad, *very* deep. It is not only in books, it is learning to live. I am an old man. When I was a boy I went with the army to the Bemba war. Then the mission came and I went to school. I became a teacher. Then I was a chief. I have seen this country change, and now the young men go away to work. I tell you Ngoni children must learn how to live, and how to work and earn money, and how to build up our land. *Uyezwa na?*' (Do you hear?)

'*Yebo Inkosi.*' (Yes, O chief.)

[P.1]

## CHAPTER I

## MARRIAGE IN THE TIME OF PEACE

### 1. *The old social structure*

IN THE DAYS before the European conquest, the Ngoni people lived in large villages each containing hundreds of huts built round a central cattle byre. Each married woman had her own hut and there were separate dormitories for boys and for girls. The huts were grouped into small clusters, each containing the dwellings of a few close agnates with their wives and children under the leadership of the senior male agnate. If the leader of the cluster was an important person, captives taken in war were allocated to him and their huts were included in his own cluster. Clusters were grouped into divisions, each usually under the control of a village lieutenant. Within the same division the heads of clusters were either agnates of the lieutenant or were people who had been captured by him or his father or who had been allocated to him by the chief and who were therefore bound to him as quasi-kinsmen. Several divisions made up a village under a headman or a regional governor. The village lieutenants were dependents or former captives of the headman or his ancestors, and were allocated to their divisions by him. Some divisions were under the control of junior kinsmen of the headman. Each village was attached to a royal headquarters where there was a senior queen. This arrangement of clusters, divisions, villages, and royal headquarters, which I refer to as the residential system, seems to have been similar to that found to-day among the Swazi.[1]

The system was a growing one. Brothers brought up in the same cluster gradually achieved their independence and split off to establish clusters of their own. The heads of clusters grew in importance and were promoted to village lieutenants so that their clusters became divisions, while divisions grew too large to be contained within the villages and moved off to establish themselves as separate villages. This process of expansion did not in itself affect the formal hierarchy of authority. The lieutenant who established his own village as a distinct spatial entity still remained a lieutenant of his lord, and deferred to him in matters of importance. The same word[2] was used to refer to a division of a royal headquarters, a division of a village, and a cluster within a division. The relationships of superordination and subordination between persons remained the same despite changes in spatial separation.

[1] Cf. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, p. 66.

[2] *Cigawo*, pl. *zigawo*, from *ku-gawa*, to divide.

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583 was left to the discretion of her father. 'Snuff-box' was handed over before the man began to sleep with his bride while bridewealth could be paid either then or later after the woman had borne children. Once bridewealth had been paid the rights of the man's group were definitely established and, in the event of the man's death, one of [581] his younger brothers became the widow's pro-husband in leviratic marriage.

583 851 The significance of bridewealth is clearly indicated by the procedure followed in marriages in which it was not paid. If a man paid 'snuff-box' and then died before he paid bridewealth, the children of the marriage belonged to his wife's kinsmen and not to his kinsmen. His brothers could secure the woman as the wife of one of them, and the children as legitimate members of their segment, by payment of bridewealth. It is said that a woman could refuse to go to a brother of her dead husband under these conditions but that she could not refuse to give up the children to the husband's kinsman who paid bridewealth. If although bridewealth had been paid she went off and married another unrelated man the children she bore to her new husband belonged to her dead husband's kin.

583 Some informants say that if a man died without having paid bridewealth his sons were under an obligation to pay cattle to their mother's kin on behalf of their dead father, but I did not hear of any instance in which this had been done. Similarly it is said that if a man had paid bridewealth but had never been given a linked co-wife, his son could claim a wife from the kin of the woman for whom bridewealth had been handed over. Other informants deny this possibility, and say that it was the man's son's son who could have made this claim. I did not hear of any instances of either practice in the past and when recently a chief tried to claim a wife on the strength of bridewealth offered by his father, he failed.

[129] [554] Important men sometimes married female captives and no bridewealth passed. These wives were usually not of high status and their sons founded lines junior to those of sons by other wives for whom bridewealth had been paid.

583 183 The general impression gained from the tales of old informants and from the contemporary literature is that 'snuff-box' and bridewealth were paid in most marriages. The evidence, such as it is, from a survey of the marriages experienced since birth by men and women alive in 1946-9 suggests that this was not so. The way in which this survey was conducted is described below.[13] The information on pre-1898 marriages is set out in Tables I and II.

[128] It will be seen that in half (7 out of 14) of these marriages, no payments at all were offered. In the marriage in which 'snuff-box' was [270] offered it consisted not of a beast but of a quantity of tobacco. In about a third of the marriages the only payment made was the 'legalization payment', which traditionally was not part of the pre-1898

[13] See pp. 22f.

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from the recollections of informants and the accounts of contemporary writers. Even in a society as rapidly expanding as was the Ngoni before 1898, the majority of the population at any one time consists of people who are politically unimportant. What were remembered and what was recorded at the time were the marriages of leaders and their close relatives. It is they, more than others, who were distinctively Ngoni, and it was by their actions that the values of Ngoni society were emphasized and developed. Their marriages were important in maintaining tribal solidarity and it is the system exemplified in these marriages that we have been describing. But the recent captives, the poor, the unsuccessful warriors, the junior sons of junior sons, they also married and their marriages were at least as numerous as those of their more fortunate brethren, despite the large bands of wives acquired by successful men.

The data in our sample provide suggestions as to both the relative frequency of marriage without payment and the kind of relationship that held between payment and status of spouse. The eight cattle were offered by one of Mpezeni's senior lieutenants as bridewealth for the daughter of a man of Nsenga origin. Two junior sons of this lieutenant each offered a beast as legalization payment for a wife, one of whom was the daughter of a divisional head. A legalization payment of unknown magnitude was made in a marriage between a village headman and a daughter of another of Mpezeni's senior lieutenants. These four marriages we may regard as important marriages between people of high status accompanied by marriage payments which usually were substantial. Among persons of low status we find that in six out of the seven marriages in which no payment was made, one or both of the spouses had been captured. Intermediately we have the remaining two marriages in which the legalization payment was made and the one in which 'snuff-box' was paid, all involving people of low or middle status and accompanied by relatively small payments, namely a chicken, some cloth, and tobacco. This positive correlation between status and payment holds for thirteen out of the fourteen marriages, but one marriage without payment was between one of the same junior sons of the lieutenant and the daughter of a man of Kalanga origin.

From such evidence as there is, it seems probable that marriages between people of high status were usually accompanied by substantial payments. At the same time, many of the marriages of people of low status and some of the unimportant marriages of men of high status took place without payments. What proportion of the total these marriages accounted for we cannot now ever hope to know. However since they amount to half of our pre-1898 sample it seems probable that they constituted a considerable fraction of all the marriages contracted at that time.

The payment of 'snuff-box' and bridewealth were the crucial events establishing a marriage, but there were a number of other transfers of beer and cattle, and a number of ceremonies without

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606 Wiese suggests that the woman only gradually transferred her place
591 of residence from her father's village to that of her husband.[19] If
593 the husband and wife quarrelled, the woman ran away to her father's village for protection, and had to be persuaded to return by her husband. It is difficult to find out if there was any obligation on the man to labour for his father-in-law. Such an obligation exists
583 to-day, but informants like to maintain that in the past the Ngoni never troubled themselves with agriculture, but lived entirely on
941 beer, meat, and raided crops. But we know from contemporary writers that they did have gardens, although they may perhaps have been cultivated only by recent captives and by women.

An important obligation on the man was to avoid his wife's mother. He did not speak to her, went off into the bush if he met her on a path, and did not pass in front of her hut. With his father-in-law he was formal and reserved, but he did speak to him. These patterns were established at betrothal, and with the passage of years were gradually set aside. The final ceremony in which the man ate with his mother-in-law was the social recognition of his successful performance of the role of son-in-law and of husband to their daughter. Even after this ceremony he could not sit on the same mat as his mother-in-law. The position of the woman in respect to her parents-in-law was much easier, and she did not avoid them or their hut.

581 As a result of these formal and informal modes of interaction
602 between the man's group and the woman's group, links of affinity were established which cut across the residential system, with its chains of authority and responsibility, superordination and subordination. The common interest of persons bound together by these links was the success of the marriage, and the well-being of the children. A quarrel between a man and his wife led to processes of discussion, deliberation and conciliation involving the two groups. The children of the marriage grew up knowing not only where they
858 belonged politically, but also where they were welcome as sister's sons and daughter's sons. Some children were sent to the father's mother to be reared, some to the mother's mother. The pregnancies of the woman were reported to her own relatives as well as to her husband's.

It is impossible to tell to what extent people consciously planned their marriages and the marriages of their children with the object of ramifying their affinal ties. But we do know that a wife who
554 had been brought from a long way off was regarded more highly than one who came from the same village as her husband, and that a woman who married her cross-cousin was, other things being equal, lower in status than her husband's unrelated other wives. These gradations in status suggest that the value of a marriage which established a link between a man and some hitherto unconnected

[19] Wiese, op. cit. 'Expedição . . .', p. 473, and 'Geschichte . . .', pp. 191-2.

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segment of the residential system was recognized and institutionalized. Furthermore, it is in line with this thesis that, in arranging the marriage of recent captives, no great attention was paid to the establishment of farflung affinal links. Frequently a man and a woman who had been allocated to the same captor, and whom they both addressed as 'father', married one another on his instructions. Payments made in these marriages were small or non-existent. Recent captives were too low in the hierarchical structure to be concerned about reinforcing their position by horizontal ties. Their ambitions were directed to securing promotion by becoming lieutenants of their captors.

*5. Autonomy of marriage*

The pattern of segmentation of the residential system was continually changing. In part this was due to proliferation downwards, that is, by the process of increasing segmentation between brothers and between fathers' sons. In addition to this process political promotion and death in war altered the relative position of the segments associated with particular people. Marriage itself was a social process which, in so far as the relationship between man and wife was concerned, did not react directly on the residential system. This system was based on patrilineal descent and patrilocal residence and the movements of women, except at the level of the queens, were from one point of view irrelevant to the system. It was the grouping of children round their mother, in contrast to their father's children by other wives, which related the marriages of one generation to the patterns of segmentation of the next. A woman with no children in her house, whether her status was high or low, was structurally irrelevant to the residential system.

Marriage was also largely independent of the central government. Warfare, not domesticity, was the right and proper occupation of young men, and the age at which men married for the first time was probably about thirty. Informants all stressed that in the old days first marriage took place at later ages for both men and women than it does now. Wiese implies that girls were married any time after puberty,[20] but my informants stated that girls did not usually marry until they were aged about twenty to twenty-five. Men and women were organized into parallel age-sets, usually referred to as regiments, and corresponding regiments used to dance and frolic together. Sometimes a man took a wife from the regiment corresponding to his own, but there does not seem to have been any positive obligation to do so. Particular regiments were not prevented from marrying, as among the Zulu, and all the tales of the Paramount Chief intervening in the affairs of warriors are phrased in terms of the chief instructing a laggard to find himself a wife when all his age mates had already married. The chief did however interfere

[20] Wiese, op. cit. 'Expediçao . . .', p. 473, and 'Geschichte . . .', p. 191.

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band one or more of his lieutenants and other dependent families. Thus the band of wives formed the core round which the sub-segments of the husband's residential segment were built up. Each band was associated with a distinct cluster of huts, although not every cluster of huts had a band of wives living in it. The division of wives into bands was only one of the processes by which the segmentation of clusters was carried on.

Each linked co-wife lived in the band of her barren senior although occasionally a linked co-wife was promoted and made head of her own band. The children of a linked co-wife were spoken of as being born in the house of her senior, but here the word 'house' (*ng'anda*) was used only in a figurative sense.[21] Where it was necessary to contrast the children of the wives of one band with the children of another, they were called the children of the head of the band. Less frequently all a man's children by his several wives were referred to as the children of the house of his great wife.

It seems that more trouble was taken to obtain a linked co-wife for a barren great wife or head of a band than for a junior wife. A great wife needed children to ratify her position in the hierarchy of co-wives, and to establish a line of descendents senior to the lines springing from her subordinates. Barrenness was the principal reason for seeking a linked co-wife but it is said that if a man had pleased his wife's father, a linked co-wife might be given spontaneously by his father-in-law as a mark of his esteem. When a wife grew old and needed domestic help a linked co-wife was sometimes given to her although she might have borne many children. A man was under an obligation to offer one beast[22] to his wife's father when he received a linked co-wife.

The children of a linked co-wife ranked immediately after the children by her senior, if there were any. They inherited the property allocated to her hut and belonged to the segment founded by her.

*7. The levirate*

The custom of linking co-wives was sometimes a kind of sororal polygyny and sometimes a variety of sororate. We may see it as a device for establishing and maintaining the residential segment potentially founded by the senior co-wife when she married her husband. Similarly we may look on the levirate as a way of ensuring that the fertility of the woman still remained attached to that same segment even after the death of her husband. A widow lived in leviratic marriage with her husband's younger brother who became

[21] Compare the similar use of the word 'house' among the Zulu and 'room' among the Tallensi. Cf. Hoernlé, 'Social organization' in *The Bantu-speaking Tribes of South Africa*, p. 78, and Fortes, *The Dynamics of Clanship among the Tallensi*, pp. 198 sqq.

[22] Called variously *mceka* or *mtoso*. *Mceka* is an Nsenga word meaning a small cloth worn round the waist by women. The allusion is to the labour pains felt by the mother of the new bride which were eased by binding her waist with a cloth. *Mtoso* has the same meaning in the old Ngoni language.

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made with the approval of the dead man's kin. Although by this arrangement the woman was for a while removed from her allotted place in the system, the *status quo ante* was restored with the return of the children to their pater's kinsmen.

*8. Segmentation*

The primary cleavage among a man's children was between the children of one band and the children of another. Within a band, the division was into separate 'houses'. Where there were children of more than one mother in the same 'house', that is where the senior wife as well as the linked wife had borne children or where there was more than one fertile linked co-wife with the same senior, the division was between the groups of full siblings. These lines of cleavage were expressed spatially by the arrangements of the huts belonging to each segment. At the top of the political hierarchy, the arrangement of the Paramount Chief's queens determined the major divisions into which the nation was split residentially, with a senior queen in charge of each major royal village, and lesser queens in charge of politically dependent royal villages. At the bottom, the man with two or three wives saw his sons group themselves round their mothers while retaining a common allegience to him.

Thus we see that in 'the time of peace' marriage was tied to a clear-cut residential system based on patrilineal descent and virilocal residence, modified by political status deriving ultimately from the Paramount Chief. The position of males in this system was determinate, although not unalterable. By the processes of marriage males were supplied with legitimate offspring. Although descent and succession were traced through males, the pattern of segmentation of this patrilineal system was determined by the organization of wives. The relative status of co-wives was perpetuated in the relationship between the segments which sprang from them.

In this system the elementary family of man, wife, and children did not emerge as an important grouping. In all serious enterprises a person derived support from his male agnates, and it was to the organized kin that the fertility of the woman was transferred by the payment of bridewealth. By the time a man had advanced in status sufficiently to be head of a division or a village, he had acquired many dependants who were not true kinsmen and his wives had been divided into bands. With the recently captured families, these considerations did not apply with quite the same force, for there were many poor men who had only one wife. These people depended on their political superior for cattle, and the women were to some extent under the control of his great wife, in so far as agricultural work and beer brewing were concerned. Even the rearing of children once they had been weaned was carried on outside the elementary family. Children were sent to their grandmother's house to be trained and indoctrinated with Ngoni values. The recent captives

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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855 593 sent their children to one of the senior wives of their captor. Husband, wife, and unweaned child slept together in the same hut, but their waking lives were spent in association with other and different groups of people.

631 554 591 In view of what has happened in modern times, we must draw attention to two features of the residential system which were not, at that time, directly related to the processes of marriage. A man lived where he belonged politically, and the residential system was an integral part of the political organization of the state. A man's place in it was determined by birth, and could not be altered except by the intervention of his political superiors. He could not change his political affiliation merely by going to live in another village or division or cluster, while if he received political promotion, or if his segment was punished by the State, the change of status was sometimes accompanied by change of residence. Secondly, choice within the system was expressed by hiving-off, not by moving about. The variable factor within any segment was the extent to which the potential cleavages within it were made actual cleavages. A man decided whether he would continue to live in the same cluster or division as his elder brother and depend on the common herd, or whether he would establish his own cluster with its own herd and own spatial identity. He did not have to decide whether he would continue to attach himself to one lieutenant or royal headquarters or whether he would transfer his allegiance to another. In this he had no choice. Choice lay in the extent of segmentation, not in the location of allegiance. We shall see that changes in these features [178] in the residential system have in recent times been related to changes in marriage.

581 613 Marriage in 'the time of peace' was essentially a means by which agnatic segments, unable by the fact of exogamy to produce their own children, were provided with child-bearers from outside the segment. A woman was associated as a child-bearer with a definite point in her husband's agnatic segment, and this association was permanent. The biological determinants of child-rearing strengthened the permanence of the association. To bear a child for her husband's agnatic segment, in any system of this general type, a woman must be associated with it for three years or more, from conception to weaning; and as one child is weaned, the next is on the way. One man can beget children for his agnatic line by many wives at the same time, but a woman can produce for only one husband at a time. Thus while it is possible to maintain stable exogamous matrilineal groupings without fixing permanently the [582] reproductive powers of men, agnatic exogamous groupings, if they are to persist in time, must be supplied with permanent sources of fertility from outside. The old Ngoni marriage system did this. [178] We shall see that nowadays both the permanent transfer of fertility and the persisting agnatic groupings have disappeared.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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one mining town to the next, sleeps for a night with a prostitute and lives for years with a concubine. What is at least relatively permanent is his relationship to his wife and to his children by her. Men still hope that they will be able to gather their children about them as they grow old, and build up new villages so that their names will be remembered. Status is still measured in terms of dependants, and the most certain of all dependants are legitimate children. Ngoni marriage no longer automatically ensures that a man will have custody of his children, but without marriage he has no hope at all of retaining them.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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lives for some years with a European may leave him and enter into a proper marriage. The favourite wife of a chief who died a few years ago had earlier been the mistress of a European.

Christians must abide by the rules of their church or risk ecclesiastical censure. A baptized Catholic man may marry only a Catholic girl or he will be suspended from receiving the sacraments. A Catholic woman must either marry a baptized Catholic or obtain dispensation to marry a catechumen. A catechumen of either sex can marry another catechumen or a pagan. In addition Catholics cannot marry if the marriage would infringe canon law. Catholic cross-cousins, therefore, can marry only by concealing their relationship from the priest. In the Dutch Reformed Church a baptized person, or a member of a class of instruction, cannot marry a pagan or a Catholic without being suspended. Other missions have similar rules.

Locality is of some importance in influencing a man's choice. The bigger the village he lives in the more likely he is to take a wife from within it, but the belief still persists that it is better to find a wife from outside one's own village if possible. In a polygynous household a wife married from her husband's own village still does not rank as high as one who has been brought in from outside, of whom it is said 'her husband had to walk to get her'. The mechanisms by which people living in different villages are brought into contact are numerous,[4] but for finding a spouse the two most important are inter-village dance contests and visits to relatives. Teams of young people, usually all girls and young women, go from their own village to others in the vicinity to dance against the home teams. Young men stand around watching them and discuss among themselves the erotic possibilities of individual dancers. As darkness falls the dancers start back home, escorted by the young men who flirt with them on the way. At the weekends there are many young men back in the villages from their employment on the farms or in Fort Jameson and they sometimes gather into gangs of half-a-dozen or so, wandering from village to village in their best clothes, with dark glasses and walking sticks, looking at the girls' dances and trying to make assignations. This sort of flirtation is confined to the young and irresponsible, and it would be regarded as unseemly for a middle-aged man to pay much attention to the dances of young girls.

More respectable contacts are made by young people who go off to stay with their relatives in distant villages. Everyone has kinsmen and affines in many different villages, and it is the custom to visit back and forth for weeks at a time. A young man may go on several days journey to visit his relatives among the Cewa and Nsenga tribes, or to live for a while with a relative working on a distant farm. While he is away, he may meet a girl whom he likes, and arrange to marry her. The dance situation does not provide

[4] Cf. Barnes, op. cit. pp. 214 ff

an adequate garden for his wife. He may clear a fresh garden on rejuvenated land, or enlarge his own or his wife's garden, depending on how they are placed. It is usually not until much later in the marriage that a man starts a garden of his own, distinct from the one nominally owned by his wife. The work of clearing a new place for a garden is not, among the Ngoni, necessarily a man's job, and can be undertaken by a woman alone if she has no man to assist her. If the husband is present, he does most of the tree felling, and his wife breaks up the new ground with her hoe.

The planting, weeding, and cultivating are all done by both men and women, and during the wet season a man goes to the garden with his wife early in the morning and they both work there until they are tired. Later, when the growing crop has to be protected against monkeys by day and wild pigs by night, they both spend long hours on watch in the garden shelter. At harvest, both cut down the maize and lift the ground crops, but only the woman can carry the produce to the village. If the man helps, it is by bringing a cart or sledge and taking home a large load pulled by oxen.

In the other subsistence pursuits of animal husbandry and hunting, there is no co-operation between husband and wife until the animals have been killed, when the woman has to cook the meat. Hunting is entirely a male occupation, and animal husbandry largely so. If a man goes away on a journey, he leaves his cattle in charge of his son or brother or father rather than with his wife. If there is no trustworthy man available, then they become his wife's responsibility, but all she in fact does is to see that the senior herdboy reports to her every evening about the state of the beasts. Small stock such as goats and sheep and pigs may be looked after entirely by the wife, and chickens are likely to be in her care.

A man looks to his wife to feed him, and it is considered a reflection on her industry if he does not get enough and has to hang about when his companions are eating in the hope that they will invite him to join them. She feeds him within the exigencies of the food-supply, which often involves semi-starvation in February and March. She is expected to cook competently, and if a woman continually burns the porridge which forms the basis of every meal, there will be strife between her and her husband. If she proves to be a really bad cook her husband may send her home again to be taught properly.

Beer-brewing is the work of women, and is a process lasting at least six days even after all the correct ingredients have been mustered. There is some variation with status in the extent to which husbands require their wives to brew beer, and it is in any case a matter in which the woman can take the initiative. Important men and chiefs who have many visitors like to be able to offer beer to their guests, so that queens spend much time brewing. But common men need to conserve their food supplies more carefully, and know that their visitors will be disappointed but not surprised if there is no beer. A woman sometimes brews to sell the beer and gain money to buy herself clothes, if her husband has no money to give her.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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589 of as being divorced from the dead man. If they do not themselves wish to be inherited they cannot be forced to remain.

587 If a widow is cared for by a younger brother of her dead husband, and that man already has a wife of his own, the widow is regarded as inferior in status to the man's own wife. Yet any children she 851 has by him count as if they were children by the dead husband, and 428 as such they inherit his cattle and offices before the brother's children by his own wife. This apparent paradox is due to the nature of 554 Ngoni seniority. Seniority was always associated with position in a definite segment in the old residential system. The widow belongs to the segment of her dead husband, and even today if she is a queen she ought to stay there after she has been given a pro-husband. If she moves to live in proximity to her pro-husband, she comes into the ranking system of which the pro-huband's great wife is the superior. Her children are, however, still associated with the segment from whence she came.

587 The new husband, whether he is a kinsman of the dead man or not, pays one goat, also known as 'snuff-box', on taking the woman, 583 and this animal she keeps herself, and does not hand on to her father or brother. If no bridewealth was paid by the first husband, the 851 children borne to the second take the descent name of their own father and his rights in the marriage are the same as if he were marrying the woman for the first time and had made the legalization payment.

589 There is then an opportunity for the marriage to continue after the death of the man if his wife and his kinsmen are both agreeable. If the widow wishes to go her own way, she can do so, and if his kinsmen do not wish to care for her, they need not. Even if they do not like the woman they cannot turn her out of the village, and she can go on living in her dead husband's hut and cultivating the same garden as before. She may even re-marry and bring in her new husband to live with her in her dead spouse's village. The extent to which this can be done without quarrelling depends very much on the personalities of the people involved. If the widow decides to go back to her own village, her husband's kin may try to prevent her removing possessions of which the ownership is not certain, and she should discuss with them how much of the crops she can take away from her garden.

587 Nowadays the death of a wife brings the marriage to an end. We have seen that in the old days the dead woman was replaced by a linked co-wife, and that this institution has now all but disappeared. There is no other form of sororate, and although a man may sometimes in jest address his wife's sister as *wife*, he has no rights over her.

593 The specific responsibilities of brothers towards a man's marriage are demonstrated in the role of the elder brother as a marriage negotiator and of the younger brother as potential husbands for a man's widows. A man would not, save in exceptional circumstances,

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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Administrative ruling that no new village could be started without a minimum of ten taxpayers, and earlier it was the policy of the Administration to decrease the number of independent villages. These policies have now changed, and throughout the period there have always been devices for lessening their effect, but it is still true that sometimes the easiest way for a man to flee from his kinsmen is to build his hut in his wife's village.

*Case history 14*

Samuel's father was headman of a village. Samuel[16] married in the village and had four sons by his wife before she died. His second wife lived with him virilocally and after she had borne two children she committed adultery with one of Samuel's elder brothers. Samuel divorced her and married a third wife who died soon after. Samuel accused his brothers of killing his first and third wives by sorcery. He married a fourth wife and went to live in her village, taking with him his four sons by his first wife and the elder child by his second wife. He is still registered at his father's village and attends there whenever the District Officer tours the area, but he has little to do with his brothers.

In this way the movements of men and women between villages reflect the struggles between kinsfolk and between affines. Besides the formation of new villages, which goes on despite obstacles placed in the way, there is a continual reshuffling of the elements making up the existing villages. Through marriage a man acquires affines and through them places where he can live if he wants to do so. This change in the structure of the village is therefore related to the new role of villages in the administrative scheme, the new rules for their formation, and the new kinds of movement from one village to another. By reason of his marriages the number of moves that a man can make if need be is increased.

### 3. *Polygyny*

The other important structural change that has been directly related to external influences is the decreased incidence of polygyny. In the old days a man acquired dependants in two ways, by begetting them and by capturing them. Wealth consisted of cattle and dependants, and the well-remembered names of the past are those of patriarchs with dozens of wives whose offspring now form the core of many villages. Nowadays the missions oppose polygyny, wealth can be acquired in other ways than by the marriage of daughters, and a variety of relatives with different genealogical ties can be gathered round one as dependants. It is rare to find a man with as many as five wives. With the decline in polygyny the system of ranking that was used to organize large compound households has fallen into decay, and except when the issue has been complicated by the payment of bridewealth, wives are simply ranked in chronological order of marriage. With the increased importance

[16] See genealogy, p. 81.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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have been discussing it. Divorce took place because the man, a recently captured Kunda, ran away back to his former tribe leaving his wife, daughter of one of Mpezeni's lieutenants, behind in her father's village. In 'the time of peace' marriages were stable, with or without payment. The wealthy men were the politically important men, and indeed Wiese's assertion that men married off their daughters so as to gain the maximum number of cattle [8] may be based on the behaviour of socially ambitious fathers in what was largely an upward-mobile society. Political affiliation effected by marriage was ratified by a transfer of wealth appropriate to its importance in the general field of political and social relations. Divorce frequency and kinship structure were the same for rich and poor, aristocrats and captives, and were neutral factors in determining the amount of marriage payment.

The second phase began immediately after the war of 1898 and lasted until about 1930. At the beginning of this period the tribe as a whole was poorer than it has been before or since. Many cattle were looted in the war and for a long time there was little money in circulation. The majority of marriages without payment were contracted during this phase, and it seems reasonable to associate this in part with the poverty of the people. It is difficult to make any precise estimate of divorce frequency at this time, although we know that many Cewa and Nsenga women who had been married before 1898 deserted their husbands and returned home when British control was established. There does not seem to be any evidence for supposing that at this period women moved from one husband to another within the confines of the Ngoni kingdom more quickly than they do now. It is perhaps safe to say that the low level of payments was due partly to poverty but also partly to the general uncertainty about the future, about the kind of society which the White Administration was building for the Ngoni. Evans-Pritchard has stressed that 'It is morals that censure divorce and law that refuses to recognize grounds for divorce which ensure the stability of the union of husband and wife.' [9] The laws and moral code that had been enforced by the old chieftainship had been shaken by the defeat of 1898. The payment of bridewealth had defined legitimate expectations of behaviour, obligations and rights, within an organized system of social relations which had been shattered. While many Ngoni must still have regarded marriage with payment of bridewealth as morally right and desirable, they must also have been aware of the greatly increased risk they were running when making these payments, even if they had the cattle to make them. Rights *in uxorem* and *in genetricem* which were socially recognized but could not be enforced through the machinery of the State were hardly

[8] See above, p. 3, footnote 3.
[9] Evans-Pritchard, 'Social character of bride-wealth, with special reference to the Azande', *Man*, xxxiv (1934), p. 174.

6:Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5



again returning to the old village. That evening they take some of the fire (that they made earlier in the day) to kindle a fire with in the (new) hut (*Kuka*). In kindling it they do not squat down, they blow the faggots into flame from a standing position, and they do this lest the smoke might ever after hang in wreaths over the floor. The womenfolk come every day to cook.

II. When the chief's huts are finished, they build those of the old men, and when these are complete, they bring all the huts [from the old village]. When they see that all the huts are finished, beer is made at the old village, and they go and bring the spirits. He who has a grave pours some beer in a gourd-pot and places it on the grave, saying, "We have gone hence, you must not search for us here, come let us go together." On that day they demolish all the huts that remain, they leave only the huts of which the occupant has lately died. When now the sun begins to slant westward, from the *Kuka* hut they take five gourd-pots, and fill them with beer and make young women carrying these lead the way. The head old woman of the *Kuka* hut goes first, the chief wife of the chief follows *Gogo*, and then come the ones carrying the beer. When they arrive at the new village they set down the gourd-pots and all the people assemble. The elder of the village then begins to propitiate, saying, "There is the beer we down on earth have made, we have gone from yonder, we present to you your new village, all men you will have a care for." Then the village chief makes a present of a goat and hands it to the old man, and he again speaks, saying, "Here is a goat which your child presents, you will wash it down with the beer." If the goat makes water, that is to say the spirit consents, if it will not they do not kill it. Then they kill the goat

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
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84° F. and the mean minimum 61·5° F.[1] Three seasons are distinguished: the wet season, from the beginning of November until about April; the cold season, from May until July; and the hot season, from August until the rains begin again. Most of the planting takes place in the first half of the wet season, and the harvest comes after the rains have ceased. There is very little fishing, but antelopes, leopards, wild pig, and buck are hunted for their meat, and lions, leopards, hyenas, and monkeys on account of the damage they do to crops and livestock. The greater part of the region is free enough from tsetse fly to permit cattle-keeping, and for the tribe as a whole there is approximately one head of cattle to every two people. Pigs, sheep, goats, and chickens are also kept.

The material culture of the tribe is similar to that of their neighbours. They live in one- or two-roomed huts of bamboo or pole and mud; some women make pottery and some men make reed mats; all buy their clothes and their hoes from the shops.[2]

Three languages are used in the region: Ci-Ngoni, a language akin to Zulu, is now heard only in songs and royal praises; Ci-Nyanja is taught in the schools and is used for communication with Europeans and Indians; while the normal language used every day in the villages is a dialect of Ci-Nsenga.

## I. THE STATE

### *Old Administrative System*

The Ngoni think of themselves as different from their neighbours because of their chieftainship. The other tribes do not, in the eyes of the Ngoni, possess the same kind of pyramidal and centralized organization which was characteristic of the régime of Mpezeni I and which persists in a modified form at the present time.

The important positions in the old political structure were occupied by members of the royal lineage, their queens, the regional governors,[3] and the lieutenants.[4] The political system was at the same time the territorial system, residence being determined by political allegiance. The pattern of residence and allegiance persisted despite the movement of the tribe as a whole from one region to another and despite

[1] Trapnell, *Ecological Survey*, pp. 2–3.
[2] See my *Material Culture of the Fort Jameson Ngoni*.
[3] *Mulumuzana*, pl. *alumuzana*.
[4] *Nduna*, pl. *nduna*.

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
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the absence of any definite internal land boundaries between the territories of one political segment and another. The constant elements were the residential groups that we now know as villages,[1] and we may liken them to ships of different sizes and importance that preserve a loose formation while the fleet sails from place to place. Villages, discrete clusters of dwellings in comparative proximity and separated from one another by uninhabited stretches of garden-land and bush, were internally divided into divisions,[2] and from time to time these divisions broke away from one another or from their parent village to form new villages of their own. This process of divisional fission was characteristic of the commoner villages. Royal villages were usually formed by a parallel process by which an important member of the royal lineage established a new village for one or more of queens by recruitment from his own natal village. The eldest son by the senior queen in that village then became the head of the segment of the royal lineage associated with the village. Thus the segmentation of the royal lineage was reflected in a proliferation of royal villages.

In the period immediately prior to the conquest of the tribe by British forces in 1898, there were four important royal villages, with populations of probably several thousands each. One belonged to a brother of Mpezeni, and the other three were controlled by groups of Mpezeni's own queens and their sons. Associated with each royal village were several regional governors, each of whom was responsible for the well-being of a group of lesser villages, and who resided among them in a village of his own. These lesser villages were commoner villages, each under its own headman. Each large royal village had also a number of lesser royal villages attached to it, and also many commoner villages were attached to a royal village of some sort directly, and not through a regional governor.[3]

Each important person, chief, member of the royal lineage, regional governor, or headman was assisted by a number of lieutenants, trusted subordinates who were usually not patrilineal kinsmen of their principal but who were sometimes related affinally. These lieutenants were ranked in order of the creation of their posts by their principal and assisted him in the control of his unit of administration. In the case of Mpezeni himself, however, there were two kinds of lieutenants. Those people known as the lieutenants of Mpezeni were

[1] *Musi*, pl. *misi*.
[2] *Cigodlo*, pl. *vigodlo*.
[3] Cf. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, p. 66, for a similar system among the Swazi.

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648 principal urban centres on the railway line in Northern Rhodesia who represent the Ngoni Native Authority in the various Native Urban Courts. These representatives are appointed by the Superior Native Authority, that is, by the Paramount Chief and his lieutenants. These posts are regarded in much the same light as those of the minor chiefs except that the tenure of office is not so stable, and the same struggles to gain them take place. There are Ngoni members of the Fort Jameson African Urban Advisory Council, but they are elected by urban Africans and are not appointed by the Native Authority.

***Rural and Urban Status***

369 554 The relatively privileged position of certain individuals in the urban order may raise their status in the life of the tribe. We have already seen how the initiative in religious matters is taken by the deacons and evangelists, and these people are also called upon to lead the prayers that precede all county meetings. The orderlies in the hospitals in Fort Jameson are able to establish private practices and number chiefs and other important people among their clients. The senior shop assistants may find it possible to entertain important people by offering them European spirits. The clerks of the Administration, as part of the protective screen around the District Officers, can exercise their discretion in allowing pleas to go forward to them.

There seems to be very much less bribery and corruption than has been reported from other parts of Africa. The Ngoni are in the main more interested in and more able to make effective use of medicines and other material goods than they are of advance information. But the fact remains that the African Civil Service and the various commercial undertakings are institutions within which a man of no importance in the village and tribe can rise to a position of influence which will affect his dealings with other tribesmen. The only Ngoni on the African Representative Council, which meets yearly and includes representatives from the whole of Northern Rhodesia, was in 1946 not a headman or lieutenant but was the most prominent African businessman in Fort Jameson.

To some extent this association of high status in the urban community and low status in the rural one is inevitable, since it is only by absence from the district for many years that a man can advance himself sufficiently and acquire sufficient skill and seniority to reach this high urban status. The member of the African Representative

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
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Council mentioned above spent some twenty years of his life in Johannesburg. Fort Jameson itself is not a sufficiently big town for this process to take place within it, and yet it is only in Fort Jameson or on the tobacco farms that a man can live with a leg in both camps, going home to the village at the week-ends and probably keeping his wife in the village during the wet season to tend her crop.

On the other hand, there is some rivalry between the traditional leaders and the comparatively prosperous townspeople. The well-clad and well-housed Ngoni of the township are sometimes described scornfully by village people as 'merely White'. There is a feeling that the leading African traders are trying to monopolize the economic opportunities in the villages. Recently the same prominent Ngoni businessman proposed that he should take over the delivery of mail to the Native Authorities, which he claimed he would be able to do more efficiently with a car than can the present postman on a bicycle. The Paramount Chief did not answer this proposal but wrote instead to the Administration to complain against the danger of one man being allowed to earn so much more than anyone else while there were so many people who needed money. At the same time, men whose lives are led principally in the towns complain that in the villages there is 'nothing but jungle', and that the chiefs are old-fashioned and obstructive.

### *The Administration*

The relationship between the Provincial Administration and the Ngoni is characteristically one of superordination and subordination. The District Officer can send for any Ngoni, but not even the Paramount Chief can send for the District Officer. This characteristic arises from two sources, from the premiss which we find held all over Southern Africa, that any White is superior to any Black, and from the supervisory role allotted to the Administration in the Native Authority scheme. These two facets of the same relationship are not always seen separately by the Ngoni, and in many contexts their behaviour towards the Administration is governed entirely by the fact that the District Officer and those above him are all White. Official reports by the Administration during the reign of Mpezeni II repeatedly remarked on the Paramount Chief's distrust of Whites, and this attitude still persists. Any kind of trouble at all, particularly when it is seen as a characteristic of the present times as opposed to the glorious trouble-free past of the days of peace, before the Whites

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
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The tribe is represented to the Administration in the person of its chief, and the fact that it is through him that the Administration articulates with the tribe is realized by thinking people. In a wider sense, he represents the tribe to the White community as a whole. When I first started work in the area there were many formalities at my meetings with the Paramount Chief, so that I should understand the importance of his position. Mpezeni II is said never to have allowed a White to see him dancing, because of the mystical and social dangers involved. At a county meeting, held while the Paramount Chief was away in Livingstone, the court clerk reminded headmen that the month of May was approaching, and that he would soon be wanting people to hoe the Native Authority roads. When the time came, he did not want headmen to say they had no people. He continued: 'If the people do not obey the laws, then Mpezeni will not be well regarded by the Whites. Then when the Administration wants to make bad laws, Mpezeni will not protest, as he will want to punish his own people.'

If the chief is too attentive to the requirements of the Administration, then his standing with his own people is likely to suffer. A chief's court was once described as 'just a White court' because of its alleged bias in favour of the Administration's interpretation of native custom. On the other hand, this identification with the White Administration is not accepted by the chiefs and their advisers. In an adultery case, in which the husband did not want to divorce his wife but she refused to go back to him, Mpezeni, who was present, ordered the woman to return to her husband. A councillor asked the woman what she had to say. She said she loved the co-respondent. The councillor was annoyed, and asked her, 'Do you know who Mpezeni is?' The woman said, 'He 's a chief', using the usual word for chief, *nfumu*, current all over north-eastern Rhodesia. The councillor replied: 'No, Mpezeni is not just a chief, everyone is a chief nowadays.' The woman then said, 'He 's a White.' The councillor answered: 'No, Mpezeni is not just a White whose orders can be sometimes obeyed and sometimes ignored. Mpezeni is *nkosi*, the great chief of the Ngoni, whose commands must always be carried out.'

Ill: Lancaster G-5 (ca. 1935) 1937 FRS Ngoni FRS



159 173 [567] Zimakazi Lavu Ngoma of the Amonga tribe worked for Soanra when he was a youth. Zimakazi was caught and made a slave in 1838, the year of the crossing. Ngungu Ngoma, his son, has often heard this from his father and the chief himself, Soanra. Zimakazi died a few years before his mistress. His son, Ngungu Ngoma, is in the N. Rhodesia Government Service and is about 60 y years of age.

[562] [593] (3) Chibenya Mkhalapi. This was the first wife of importance of Zongendaba, the fashion wife. When Zongendaba's mother, Mqaanacha Nxima, died, Chibenya was taken out of the chief's house and put in his mother's place and called "the Great Mother." This is a well-known custom amongst the Ngoni. The date of her death and place of burial are not known by the present day chiefs. It is stated by some of the indunas that she accompanied Zongendaba north and crossed the Zambesi in 1835, by others that she was the mother of Mtwalo, but this appears doubtful.

[645] [701] (4) Gwaza Tole. Brother-in-law of Zongendaba; Chief Councillor and one of the great indunas. Tribe, Ngoni; regiment, Maduya Inthi. Father, Ngobozwana (Njobozwana), mother and wife, not known; sons, Mankambewa and Chitete.

[554] [578] Zongendaba had married one of Gwaza's sisters. He appears to have been an elderly and very wise councillor, in whom the chief placed great trust and whose advice the indunas and captains readily accepted. Gwaza killed one of Zongendaba's wives on his instructions, possibly his own sister. This led to ill feeling, and it is stated that Gwaza and certain others of his following kept apart from the chief after this affair. He died at Fipa and was buried there in 1848.

159 173 167 (5) Zulu Gama. Father, Njaru; mother, not known; wife, Nayalisa.

Zongendaba married a sister of Zulu Gama (possibly Mambaw Gama) before the Zambesi crossing. They had no issue.

On the upward trek after crossing the Zambesi River to the Fipa country, Zulu Gama left his wife, Nayalisa, at a village near Kasitu; she had a son by him named Paulos Gama, to whom Zulu Gama left villages at Lusanjasi near Mirambo.

[578] After Zongendaba's death, Zulu Gama and a following broke away, and were followed by the adherents of Mombera. A fight took place near what is now Old Langenburg, and Mombera's people were scattered by this wily old induna. He crossed the Shire River in 1866. He entered Senga and died there later. Chief Ngobi Mawiko was killed by

[554] Zulu Gama. Zulu Gama appears to have been a general of high qualities and a sound councillor.

159 173 [10] [646] (6) Njokwane Nzilla. Father, Mpangu, a brother of Hintshwayo; mother, Manyowezana; wife, Mtanga Jojo; sons: Kapatamoyo I., Soudwani, Siopo Chafumula, Chulu, Mone, Mayeu. A cousin of Chief Zongendaba. Chief Induna of the Zwangendaba regiment and Chief Induna of the Council. Died at Mpandasi Hill, Bulawayo River, in the year 1868.

(7) Mgai Komalo. Father, Hintshwayo; mother, unknown; wife, Bibi Nkhosi. Regiment, Majokwane. Died in the Ufipa Country 1848.